LEAVES FROM A SPORTSMAN'S DIARY

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Yours truly,
Parker Gillmore

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LEAVES

FROM A

SPORTSMAN'S DIARY

BY

PARKER GILLMORE

("UBIQUE")

AUTHOR OF

"ENCOUNTERS WITH WILD BEASTS," "PRAIRIE AND FOREST,"
"GUN, ROD, AND SADDLE," ETC., ETC.

SECOND EDITION

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PREFACE.

THE experiences, and conclusions on Gunnery and Natural History that I have arrived at from them, are the result of many years of travel and hardship in the most distant parts of the world. To place them before the public in their present form has afforded me much pleasure, and their perusal, I trust, will be interesting to the general reader.

Although it will be learned that I have made heavy bags, I have never done so unless the game could be utilised as food; for unnecessary slaughter, to my ideas, is one of the greatest wickednesses that the human family can be guilty of. I wish, therefore, that my countrymen would think as I do on this point, when fortune or inclination places them in the great natural preserves of the Universe.

"UBIQUE."

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LEAVES FROM A SPORTSMAN'S DIARY.

A TIGER AND FEVER DEN.

In the above few words what a lot is expressed, but I am about to write of a place that most thoroughly deserves this appellation, viz. the Sunderbunds—not "Cumberbunds," as I heard a youngster once call them to a lot of country cousins—at the mouth of the Ganges. Of the thousand-and-one passengers that annually pass up the Hoogly on their way to Calcutta, some of them "griffs," others matured and seasoned Anglo-Indians, very few indeed know that the dense jungle, on either hand of the course that the ship is pursuing, swarms with many descriptions of the largest and most formidable game, while the atmosphere that floats over its surface is redolent with miasma, so pregnant with death to Europeans that few can breathe it for even a short season and survive the ordeal.

Yet, in spite of these drawbacks to hunting, so firmly is the passion for indulging in field sports sown in the breast of our countrymen, that many of our officers, both military and naval, have attempted the task of exploring the delta of the "Sacred River," and of forcing landings and cutting their way through the dense tropical semi-aquatic jungle that covers the innumerable labyrinths of islands that composes it.

When commanding a detachment in the East, I had an assistant surgeon attached to me for duty. He was a tall, powerful, genial young Scotchman, a keen hand with the rifle, and as partial to making use of that weapon as it was possible for a human being to be; in fact, his craving to slay big game almost amounted to a mania. His name I may as well mention, for he has long joined the vast majority; it was Vans Best, the son, I think, of a north-country banker. I daresay there are some remaining who were in China with us between the years 1857 and 1861 who will remember "the Doctor's" towering figure, followed closely by his black Foikeen dog, that enjoyed life and reputation under the fostering name of "Peats."

But to return to the Sunderbunds. Vans Best resolved when time and circumstances occurred to suit his purpose, that he would apply for leave to explore that portion of the delta that adjoins on the Hoogly, hoping and trusting that the fickle jade Fortune would smile upon him, and give him a chance to empty his rifle upon a worthy target. But luck was not propitiated even by the ardour and pluck of the adventurous young sportsman, although he remained on his tour for many days, and searched and navigated every bay and estuary that promised from appearances, a prospect of gratifying his craving. "Spoor" the Doctor found everywhere in abundance; tell-tale "pugs" informed him that tigers, buffalo and even rhinoceri were all familiar with these almost unknown jungles, but so impenetrable were they that to follow up the tracks was an utter impossibility. However, his trip did not terminate without an adventure that might have proved serious. In the long dank jungle-grass he stepped upon something that evidently had life. With a natural instinct he sprang a pace or two on one side, when to his amazement an immense serpent raised its head several feet from the ground and came directly at him. Presence of mind was not a defect Doctor Vans Best suffered from; a quick and unerring aim cut the reptile in two, and so was terminated the life of what might have been a most formidable antagonist. This brute was a python or boa-constrictor, not unknown in the lowlands of tropical South Africa, and varies but little from the anaconda of the valleys of the Amazon or Orinoco. It measured twenty-four feet in length, and was of unusual thickness. Besides this trophy he secured two muggers (crocodiles) of unusual size, so that his hazardous expedition was not without affording a reward.

A gentleman with whom I became acquainted, an officer of the well-known Pilot service, whose brigs used to cruise in all weathers off the mouth of the Hoogly, informed me that he had known many natives, who had been indiscreet enough to land on some of the low-lying islands of the locality, carried off by tigers, and that a lascar was killed in a boat by a python, the serpent being in turn dispatched by the unfortunate victim's comrades after a most severe battle. This reptile measured twenty-six feet in length. I remember reading my notes of these events to my friend the celebrated naturalist, Mr. Blyth, at one time curator of the Calcutta Museum, and he assured me that he had known of a boa-constrictor being killed in the Sunderbunds that measured in length thirty-two feet eight inches, and that he believed that these non-poisonous serpents, in the locality alluded to, often attained greater length. I have never known the accuracy of a statement of Mr. Blyth's questioned, and as a naturalist I doubt if he ever had an equal.

In conclusion, I would mention a sad occurrence that took place in the Sunderbunds at the termination of the last century. I do so, because the victim was closely related to my very dear and true friend, Captain Arthur Munro, of Fowlis Castle, Ross-shire, N.B., who, I am grieved to say, has lately been called to his last parade. The following is the story :—

"Mr. Munro, son of Sir Hector Munro, was killed by a tiger on Saugar Island. He went on shore on the island to shoot deer, of which the party saw innumerable tracks, as well as those of tigers, notwithstanding we continued our diversion till nearly three o'clock. When sitting down by the side of a jungle to refresh ourselves, a roar like thunder was heard, and an immense tiger seized Mr. Munro, and rushed again into the jungle, dragging him through the thickest bushes and trees, everything giving way to its enormous strength ; a tigress accompanied its progress. The united agonies of horror, regret, and fear rushed at once upon us all. I fired on the tiger, he seemed agitated (?) ; a companion fired also, and in a few moments our unfortunate friend came up to us, bathed in blood. Every medical assistance was vain, and he expired in twenty-four hours, having received such deep wounds from the teeth and claws of the animal as rendered his recovery hopeless. A large fire, consisting of ten or twelve trees, was blazing by us at the time this accident took place, and ten or more of the natives were with us. We had hardly pushed our boat from that accursed shore, when the tigress made her appearance, almost raging mad, and remained on the sand all the while that we continued in sight."

Altogether I fear that the Sunderbunds will afford little sport, but an abundance of danger. The last without the former is scarcely attractive enough for any but an enthusiast, and even such a person, when he remembers the probable fever that will certainly await him, will pronounce the verdict that "the game is not worth the candle." However, it is worthy of note, in fact remarkable, that indigenous wild game retain their original habitat in spite of the vicinity of an immense and populous city, and the constant traffic, both by steam and sailing vessels, that ever must be passing within their sight and even hearing.

BEARS AND BEAVERS.

SOME years ago I lived in what was then the "Ultima Thule" of civilization in Upper Canada. The scene of what I am about to describe lies about 140 miles, by water route, north of Toronto, and for glories of vegetation, lovely lakes, and enchanting rivers would be hard to surpass by what can be viewed in any other part of the world.

On the south-west shore of Lake Couchachin at the bottom of Lake Simcoe, is situated the picturesque and prosperous village of Orillia, attractive to all beholders' eyes, from its numerous pretty, tasteful white cottages surrounded by gardens and orchards, bearing flowers and fruits that never failed to bring to the distant sojourner memories of the land of his birth.

Lake Couchachin, when unencumbered with ice, is as blue as the azure waters that lave the shores of the Bay of Naples, while the ridges that back the village are covered with a dense growth of the handsomest varieties of forest trees.

The society of Orillia in the days I write of, although sparse, was select, for many of the officers who had served under the Iron Duke in the Peninsula and at Waterloo, or under Sir Robert Sale in Afghanistan, had chosen it as a suitable locality in which to spend with ease and comfort the remainder of the days allotted to them on earth.

Lake Couchachin bears upon its bosom numerous islands, picturesque in outline, and without a single exception fringed with trees or brush down to the water's edge. In front of Orillia are situated the two largest of these; between them is a passage nearly half a mile wide, and through this strait is the direct route to the Chippewa village of Rama. Indian missionary stations are as a rule not much to crack about, for it is difficult to inculcate into the red man the practice of cleanliness and order.

Like Constantinople, Rama was far more attractive from a distance than it was when you were within its precincts; this may be accounted for by its position being picturesque, and the indentations of the lake there being numerous and irregular.

To the northward of Rama, about three miles, I resided with a fellow-countryman; he knew Scotland as well as I did myself, was quite as keen a fisherman, but was indifferent to field sports when the gun took precedence. This I account for from his being a bad walker, for when I made distant trips, even for the sole purpose of capturing black bass or maskalonge, he invariably found some excuse for not accompanying me.

Thus it was that all my earliest voyages, all my earliest journeys of discovery were made alone, and although the pleasure of finding a new lake or river was excessive, still the want of a comrade to discuss their merits and beauties over a social pipe were ever felt.

As the greater part, and always the most successful of my fishing was performed when afloat, many were the long tramps I had across *portages*, and through pathless woods, encumbered not only with my fishing tackle and gun, but also with my small hunting canoe.

Although the weight of a birch bark canoe is not great, still if the weather was warm and close, which it not infrequently was in early autumn, a mile or two with such a load required both patience and perseverance to traverse long distances. *Packing it* from lake to lake, or from stream to stream, might be tedious and exhaustive work, but this could have been put up with without a murmur if it had not been that while you were in the shelter of the woods you were constantly assailed by innumerable mosquitoes, and as it required both your hands to support your birch bark boat, and steer it in the necessary direction in which you wished to go, so as to prevent its frail sides from coming in contact with tree or bush, you were quite at the mercy of your bloodthirsty foes.

Excessive exercise produces perspiration, and when such occurs the pores of the skin become open ; and well did your tormentors know this, for a moment after they had alighted upon you, their formidable proboscis would be inserted without difficulty, and the irritation that ensues is easier to imagine than describe.

What a blessing it is that mosquitoes had not been made the size of elephants, or even of dicky-birds ; a man's life in the haunts they frequent would not be worth an hour's purchase. Mosquitoes I have found troublesome in nearly every part of the world, but for regular out-and-outers, thorough varmints, uncompromising, unconquerable demons, I have never found any that could be compared to those of North and North-West America.

Fortunately, cultivation of the soil, and clearing away brushwood, tends rapidly to diminish their numbers, so that in a few years it may be hoped that the places which knew them shall know them no more.

It was a beautiful morning in the middle of September when I left my friend's residence. A beautiful morning, I may well say, for in no other part of the world have I witnessed such grand and glorious autumns. To make thoroughly enjoyable the exercise of walking, the temperature is perfect, the woods are dry under foot, and the branches have scarcely yet commenced to drop their foliage; and what foliage it is! So gorgeous in colouring, that it would require more than the palette of an artist to equal it in variety and brilliancy. For the maples (hard and soft) assume hues that are as magnificent as they are manifold, the former possessing every tint, from palest pink to deepest red; the latter, from the slightest tinge of canary colour to the darkest orange.

Nor are other trees and shrubs less favoured. The shumach tosses aloft its tassel-shaped blossom, rivalling, in the intensity of its purple, our well-known home plant love-lies-bleeding; while its leaf, by nature's prodigal hand, is painted vermilion of the deepest dye.

The basswood, the willow, and the poplar, have also put on their autumn garb, and the soft, transparent green of their foliage has given place to varied shades of straw and salmon colour. The abovementioned trees are the inhabitants of the low-lying grounds; those that are to be found upon the ridge sides, such as the pine, cedar, and tamaraek, retain their dark and sombre tints, which, as well can be imagined, forms a fitting and effective frame to their more brilliant coloured brethren of the lowlands.

It appears to me almost heresy in a Scotchman to say that anything can excel the beauty of the colour of Caledonia's mountains, when covered with blooming heather, but regardless of consequences, and of even being thought unworthy of my Fatherland, I fearlessly assert, that the unprejudiced eye will see more grandeur of colouring, and more perfect blending of tones in a Canadian forest, in the early part of the fall of the year, than will be found in any glen or ravine in the highlands of bonny Scotland.

Through these lovely scenes I tread my way, made doubly enchanting by frequent glimpses of the beautifully plumaged wood grouse, strutting before me as if conscious of the attractiveness of its feathering; while often the Canadian grouse, no less beautiful in garb, on rapid wing, flushes before my intrusion, and wheels its flight to less disturbed vicinities.

The red and grey squirrels sported and gambolled in every direction, and chased one another from tree to tree, every now and again performing acrobatic feats that almost equalled those of the long-armed apes of the Malay peninsula. That they get frequent falls in springing from tree to tree there is no doubt, but when they do so, the merry little creatures appear to take it all as a matter of course, as without hesitation they continue their gambols, as if a descent of fifty or sixty feet were an every-day occurrence, and rather to be enjoyed than otherwise.

Nor are these woods tenantless of warblers, whose notes are as sweet and plaintive as those of the mavis or robin.

First comes the blue bird, dear to every American's heart, for the melody of his voice does not surpass the beauty of his form and azure plumage. About the size of the martin, and not unlike it in mode of flight, this little darling appears to spend its life in warbling carols of the sweetest cadence. The oriole and American robin seem to have little else to do than has the blue bird, while the spotted coat of the former, and the effulgent breast of the latter, emphatically contradict the accepted idea that melody is never to be found in the notes of a brilliantly plumaged bird. Overhead other voices are to be heard, possibly less melodious than those previously mentioned, yet none the less attractive to the lover of nature.

Should the traveller halt and lay his load aside, and gaze into the topmost branches of some of the mammoth trees of the forest, he will discover a colony of beauties; birds whose existence he would not be aware of till winter set in, for these carefully avoid the haunts of man till the snows compel them to seek for food in the neighbourhood of his dwellings. These are the cedar birds (Bohemian chatterers), the snow birds, cross beaks, and cat birds, alike attractive in form and colour.

If you chance to be a novice in these woods, a steady, tap, tap, tap, almost as audible as that produced by a hammer striking a nail, will constantly fall upon the ear; the noise is so loud and defined that the listener can well suppose that it is produced by a human being, and if he should be nervous, he might unquestionably feel alarmed, till he discovered that it was not one of his own race that caused his discomfiture. This tap, tap, tapping is not at the garden gate, but on the dead limb of some aged tree, the result of the incessant hammering of the giant red-headed woodpecker, seeking for the larvæ of numerous insects, which form the principal part of its dietary.

This family are a happy-go-lucky, inquisitive, and talkative lot, either hard at work in pursuit of their prey, or scolding and wrangling with their fellows.

I am inclined to believe that they are domineering and tyrannical, for when a younger bird appears to have discovered a good hunting-ground, on which game is abundant, the old or larger ones drive off the successful discoverer, and appropriate the game as *spolia optima.*

These predatory invasions are strenuously opposed, but when the odds are too heavy in favour of the aggressor, the refugee will seek assistance from some adjoining chum, when both will return and attack the freebooter, drive him off, and probably terminate the alliance by a battle royal to decide the question who is to remain in possession.

Human beings have been known to do such things before; read the history of India in proof of it, but it is strange to see that birds, in their conduct, should so well repeat history, for we are told history repeats itself.

But the edge of Lake St. John has now been reached. Carefully my frail canoe is placed upon the water surface, where neither stone nor branch can scratch its delicate sides. In it I as carefully place my fishing tackle and gun, then gather a big armful of cedar fronds to place under my knees when paddling, all which being done, deftly I shove my light craft from the shore with the end of my paddle, and with low-dipped blade push for deeper waters.

This lake was ever a favourite haunt of mine, for its surface was seldom otherwise than placid, and if the sun were touching the horizon, either to the east or west, the shadows cast by the surrounding timber were as clearly delineated upon its surface as if they had been painted upon canvas.

Not only was the outline perfect, but there was the colouring as clear, as brilliant, as diversified as it existed upon the margining shores.

The day of which I speak the water was unruffled, not even a ripple broke upon the beach; the only momentary disturbance of its surface was occasioned by the rise or splash of maskalonge or black bass, the eddyings made where a loon had dived, or the tiny wavelets caused by the feet of some wary duck that had taken alarm at my intrusion.

Before the sun had reached its zenith, many a gallant fish, after long and futile efforts to escape, had succumbed to my skill, and lay before me in all the magnificence of ever-changing hues.

Poets sing of the dolphin's shades when in death. Time after time I had admired them, but of a truth they do not excel those of the black bass when *in extremis*. In every way this is a noble and splendid fish, for it is a free feeder, and when hooked, game as any of the salmon family—struggling and fighting till it yields up its life. But the sun being warm, and I satisfied, with strong arm I directed my course to a bluff which overhangs the water and gave a wide view of the surrounding country.

This bluff is a favourite haunt of mine. At one time I think that it must have been a much frequented meeting place of the red man, for it is cleared of bush and timber down to the water's edge, and these people are wonderfully attracted by charm of situation. The grass upon its slopes was as green and close as could be found on any English lawn, and the water that laved the base so clear that the pebbles could be distinctly observed, although covered by many a foot of water. It was a place of all others to build a cottage, and doubtless would have been appropriated for that purpose, but for the difficulty of obtaining supplies for its residents at all seasons of the year.

To have erected an edifice upon it, in my belief, would have been to profane the spot. Man's handiwork is all very well in its way and in its place, but I have seen localities where its existence looked to me very much like desecration. I can believe that persons born and brought up in cities can find no pleasure in solitude. I do not envy them their taste, for the most perfect happiness I can find at times, the most perfect rest to body and mind, is to be alone, and as far from civilization as it is possible to go. In using these words I do so guardedly, for I do not object to the presence of the aborigines in their own lands, for in my idea it wants them to make the picture perfect.

The waterless wastes of the Kalihara desert, without the bushmen, the highlands of the Zambesi without the Bechuana or Matabele natives, would not be half as attractive as they are with them; thus the presence of the red man of North

America, in places far beyond the settlements, does not detract from the repose and fascination to be found in an American forest. Mind, I do not speak of the half-civilized natives, their aping of the white man is a fearful trial to endure; moreover, I have invariably discovered that the savage, by contact with our race, rapidly loses his own virtues, and soon acquires our most repulsive national vices.

It may seem strange to the reader that I should hunt and consequently kill wild animals, fish, and therefore take the lives of the lovely inhabitants of the lakes and rivers, but I do so, knowing that they were provided by an all-wise Creator for man's support; but when sufficient food has been obtained, I stay my hand and cease to slaughter. Would that all men did the same.

There is a fascination in hunting that few can stand the test of without becoming one of its votaries. It is in the greatest solitudes you seek large game, and generally alone you do it, while on every side you are surrounded by the productions of nature's hands, pure and untainted by man's devices. Only those can excel in it, who devote all their thought and attention to what they are employed in, and be willing to endure fatigue, often thirst, hunger, and exposure, before they can hope for success, while the mind is ever exercised with constant fluctuations between hope and fear that your efforts will or will not be rewarded.

Near this bluff I had a bear trap set, which once rewarded me with a capture, at the same time nearly cost me my life in securing it. The story is as follows:—

I had been fishing one morning on the lake, and my success had been greater than usual. However, when the sun approached its altitude, the breeze died away, and the heat became insufferable. Then I resolved to land, rest for a few hours, and afterwards resume my amusement. I had with me as companion a most intelligent little terrier, whose sole aim in life appeared to be to serve his master, ever performing his duties with zeal and skill. He certainly was a rare little animal to possess, but such characteristics are only matured by making a dog your constant companion, and ever treating him with unvarying kindness and consideration.

Having lunched, I settled down to the enjoyment of my pipe, beneath a wide-spreading cedar tree ; there I fell asleep. I could not have been very long under the influence of Somnus, when I became aware that Prince was growling, and otherwise expressing much excitement. Those who have led a wild life know how your senses become sharpened by it, so in a moment I was awake, and alive to all that surrounded me. However, I saw nothing, heard nothing ; thus thought the alarm to be a false one. But my terrier did not think so, for he continued to manifest his displeasure, and by every available means draw my attention to something not far distant. The heat had made me drowsy, and the exercise tired, so disturbed further I would not be.

When the day had got an hour further advanced I arose, and as I intended fishing beyond where my morning's work had been confined, resolved to leave what I had caught, to be called for on my way home.

From one of the boughs of the cedar above alluded to I suspended them, a most suitable place for a temporary larder it was, as it afforded abundant protection from the sun, still was open to every breath of air that moved in the vicinity. But prying eyes were watching me, their owner having doubtless arrived at the conclusion, " What a fool this man is, if he thinks he is placing those nice fresh fish out of my reach ; wait till his back is turned, when I will make a lunch of them."

Adjoining the bluff a fine deep river enters the lake. On either side it is margined with rushes and large lily leaves; an occasional willow or poplar here and there growing sufficiently near the water to tap its steady flowing surface with their drooping tendrils. It did not take an angler of much experience to know at first sight that it was just such a place as pike would select for a haunt, nor would the tyro be wrong in this conclusion. I have had the fortune to have fished in many similar places, but never yet one that so swarmed with this voracious fish; in fact, they might almost have been said to jostle one another, and then they were such monsters, and moreover possessed of such insatiable appetites, that the trouble was not to hook them, but to play them and get them into your canoe. Pike are not a very dainty fish when captured in our home waters, doubtless because they have access to sewage and other filth, but those taken from this Canadian lake did not subsist on garbage, so were as firm and nearly as well flavoured as trout. Thus, with the aid of strong tackle, I soon secured as many as I required, so turned my face homewards.

Shortly after I landed at the bluff, and proceeded to my *cache*, when, to my surprise, I found that robbers had been there before me, and had appropriated quite the giant's share of my morning's work. But that was not all, what the invaders had not eaten, they had scattered and mauled to such an extent that they had become quite unfit for human food. There was no doubt who were the despoilers, for the ground around was deeply indented with the tell-tale track of bears. One of these animals I could see was a monster, while the other footprints were quite small, thus causing me to conclude that there had been a family party—a mamma and two young hopefuls—engaged in the larceny.

As the sun was still a considerable height in the heavens, I determined to build a *bower house*, and place the remains of the fish at its upper end, so as to familiarize the beasts with its presence, and further enable them to complete their repast without alarming their suspicious natures. Having completed these arrangements, I bid the spot adieu for a season, fully resolved that I would return at an early period with a bear trap.

A bower house, it may be necessary to inform the readers, is simply a tunnel of boughs of about ten or twelve feet long, at the end of which the bait is hung from a limb of a tree, sufficiently high as to cause Bruin some exertion to reach it, while directly underneath your trap is set in the ground, and to complete its concealment, covered over with dead leaves or the withered spines of the fir tree. The trap must not be fastened to the ground, but to a thick pole of timber, which the captive can drag, otherwise it would gnaw off its foot to regain liberty. A bear does not look a very knowing animal, but we must not always judge from appearances, for these animals have been frequently known to take the pole in their mouths and thus carry it, so as to prevent it retarding their passage through the thick brushwood.

The North American Indians say that a bear will not seize a man who is lying by a fire until it has extinguished the latter, and the way the beast accomplishes this purpose is certainly curious, to say the least of it. Having thoroughly saturated its coat with water at the nearest available place, it returns to the hunter's or traveller's camp, and extinguishes the glowing embers by violently shaking itself over them. I cannot say that I believe this story about Bruin, but it is a remarkable coincidence that the native hunters of Siberia assert the same thing.

Now both these people live so far apart, that they can have no intercourse with each other, so there may be—remember I say may be—some truth in the yarn.

About a week after I had been deprived of my fish, I returned to the bower house, intent on mischief to the interesting family, for I had with me a powerful trap, my gun, and my invaluable companion, Prince.

As anticipated, when I reached the scene of action I found the bait gone and the structure considerably damaged. In fact, the surroundings looked very much as if there had been an effort to do as much mischief to my edifice as possible. It was not without a chuckle I repaired the damage, thinking all the time that my turn would come to play the winning game.

With great satisfaction I hung up some most alluring fish, then scratched away soil sufficient to sink the trap, over which I sprinkled numbers of capsful of water, to remove the slightest taint from my touch, and then covered the whole over with an inch deep of withered spines from the adjacent pine trees. Everything was done carefully, and therefore well done. So Prince—who knew all about traps—and myself surveyed my handiwork with much complacency. Even now, as I write this, I can imagine I see the comical, intelligent look of that little wee dog, as with one ear up and the other down, he was ever wont to survey any snare or pitfall I was constructing to beguile the unwary denizens of the forest. In fact, this terrier's knowledge in these matters was a great saving of trouble and anxiety to me, for he always took precious good care not to get into these snares. Moreover, his intelligence several times saved me a good skin, for of his own accord he would visit traps which were within a mile or so of my residence, when, if he found a *mink* or *martin* secured, he would at once return to tell me so. At first he did this by plucking my trousers till my attention was attracted, when he would move off in the direction desired, frequently looking round to see if I was coming. Latterly there was no necessity for the first part of the performance, his expression being amply sufficient to tell me his wishes.

After setting the trap, we crossed the lake to see what could be obtained for supper, as I had determined to camp out for the night, in order to facilitate my return to the bower house on the morrow.

I was in luck's way, for in a short time I procured some wood grouse, and several splendid black bass, the finest of America's freshwater fishes. So with the tea, bread, pepper, and salt, which I had brought with me, I very soon had in preparation an excellent and substantial supper.

Never was an animal so much in his element as Prince was on such occasions. Possibly he might have thought that then he had his master all to himself, and that he was responsible for his security during the silent and dark hours of night. Whether so or not, the little dog became transformed into a very big one indeed, if he were judged by the airs of importance he assumed. Of course, on these occasions he always got a corner of his master's blanket, sometimes a very big corner indeed, for, like human creatures, he would at times presume.

At first, when I passed the night alone, camping out in the backwoods, I would feel very lonely, and sometimes, I am not ashamed to say, frightened; but this soon wears off, and is replaced by a love for this primitive mode of life that truly becomes fascinating. In early autumn in America this is particularly so, for the temperature is all that can be desired; wood for your fire is abundant, and rain is then rarely known. Again, from sunset to sunrise your ear is incessantly greeted with the musical notes of *whip-poor-wills and kati-dids*, the first a bird and the latter an insect. If encamped near water you will also frequently hear the deep full voice of the bullfrog, and it can make a row when it has a mind to, but it is a pleasant row after all, for it is a full and sonorous bass, but with a tinge of bluster. This last may be imagination, arrived at from knowing what a contemptible cowardly thing the voice emanates from. It is more than possible that such is the case, for appearances go very far with the human family.

By sun-up next morning the kettle was singing, and the frying pan sputtering over the camp fire, and breakfast was about to be commenced, when an Indian of the Chippewa tribe, from the neighbouring village of Rama, joined me. He was an old acquaintance, and when sober one of the best of good fellows, but when drunk—which I fear was very often—a most thorough bore.

Poor Joe had evidently just terminated a debauch, for he was very dirty, poorly clad, and without his gun. On calling his attention to these facts, without hesitation he informed me that he had pawned his rifle for rum, and now was going a round of traps, with the hope that he would secure some pelts to redeem his invaluable weapon. With him he had no arms, if I except his tomahawk and a powerful pole of rock elm, serving alike as walking-stick and weapon of defence.

Having satisfied our hunger, I disclosed to the Indian my plans, when it was resolved that he would join me at the bluff in the course of an hour.

After Joe had disappeared into the forest, I embarked, and between fishing and make-belief employments, passed the intermediate time. On landing at the bluff, however, there was no sign of Joe. Impatiently I waited for an hour, but as the expected man did not put in an appearance, I started for my trap. Whew! there had been a row at the bower house and no mistake, for an entire side had been torn away and scattered all over the vicinity. Such signs as these were easily understood; the trap had sprung and secured a foot, and that foot, from the wholesale wreckage that had taken place, probably was the property of the old mother herself.

Tracking her for some distance was easy enough, for the log attached to the trap had crushed down and in many places even broken the diminutive bushes over which it had been dragged.

As every minute might bring me into the presence of the foe, whose temper was certain to be anything but sweet, I had to be cautious, and therefore slow. The distance the game was in front of me I could not estimate with certainty, although I supposed it not far, therefore the greater necessity that I should be prudent. I might, of course, have let Prince take up the trail, but I knew he was sometimes over eager, and then, there were three foes to be avoided, either of whom would have been large enough to have terminated his earthly career by a blow or a bite. Thus the terrier, a little unwillingly I must say, trotted at my heels.

At length I thought I heard the breaking of brushwood in front; shortly after followed the loud *whirr* made by the flushing of a family of wood grouse; what both the sounds combined told I knew, so the excitement became intense. Several times I had cocked my gun, as often strained my eyes to excess with the hope that the chase was close to a termination, but I was doomed to a most unexpected disappointment, for the trail suddenly disappeared. This was no tracking ground for a novice in venery to try his skill upon, for dead leaves and fir spines lay thick all over the soil, so after casting about in search of some indication that noted the direction taken by the quarry, I was brought fairly to a standstill for want of knowing what to do further.

For a time I thought the bears had ascended some of the adjoining trees, and were possibly, from an elevated position in them, taking note of my actions; but, if such were the case, which trees could they be, for on the bark of none could I discover their claw marks, which are not difficult to detect by an observant eye? Again, the question arose. Could the old lady take up the log with her? Certainly it did not appear possible, for it was both heavy and cumbrous.

There was nothing for it, at length I saw, but to let my dog go, and this he evidently knew as well as I did, for as soon as permission was granted him off he went, not hurrying, but sufficiently in advance to enable me to follow.

The direction the terrier took was almost the reverse of what I had expected, but as a cedar swamp lay that way, it was not improbable that the Bruins would seek it in their trouble; moreover, my terrier's nose was ever wonderfully sensitive, and with such large game before him was not likely to play him false on such an important occasion.

In a few minutes I was convinced that we were right, for Prince's apology for a tail kept wagging incessantly and most demonstratively. I did not now require my eyes so much, for I should have ample warning before entering the enemies' presence; thus we were getting over the ground at a good rate of speed, when we struck a clearing caused by fire that had run over the ground at no late date, for no second growth had yet sprung up to cover it, when close in front of me I perceived the trio, the youngsters leading and the parent in the rear, carrying the log in her mouth, just in such a way as all have seen a Newfoundland or retriever carry his master's stick.

The quarry were quite as soon aware of my presence as I was of theirs, for the young ones at once fled and deserted their dam, while the old lady dropped her load and expressed by look and manner that she was resolved to defend her children's retreat, and if necessary sell her life in doing so.

Poor thing, the odds were all in my favour with that hideous trap fast to her hind leg, cutting and tearing the flesh at every exertion she made; still her strength and size were such that it behoved me, her assailant, to be careful what I was about, for if a false step or a misfire threw me in her power in her present state of mind, I could scarcely expect to escape without being fearfully mauled.

Although the bear has not the activity of the larger members of the cat family, still when wounded it is quite as dangerous an antagonist, if ever you get within its reach, its power of destruction being almost beyond belief.

A whistle brought Prince instantly to my heels, for now the encounter was to be between the principals. I had little fear for the result, for my gun was a good one, and heretofore I had generally held it straight. The distance that severed us could not have been over twenty paces, and as the foe was gradually lessening it, I fired, hoping to strike her in the chest. At the instant I pressed the trigger she must have lowered her head, for the bullet had made a most unsightly wound along the jaw and cheek. But neither pain nor shock to her system operated for a moment in checking her resolve, for with a rush she dashed forward at me. I fired the left barrel into her carcass, the region of the heart being what I aimed at, but the result was not what I anticipated, so with an empty gun in my hands I was compelled to beat a retreat.

When I think of the matter it seems almost miraculous how I eluded the bear's grip at that moment. I am aware that I raised my gun as a last resource to protect my face. However, lucky for me, it was avoided somehow. To Prince having laid hold of the enemy's flank at the instant of attack, or the log attached to the trap coming in violent collision with some protruding stump or stone, I may attribute my escape.

But I was not yet out of trouble, for a second rush was made upon me, which I was endeavouring to fend off, by holding my gun with both hands in front of my chest, when a flash passed my eye, and to my surprise the enemy gradually sunk down within almost touching distance. The whole affair appeared a miracle, for there was no report, and to nothing that I was aware of, could I attribute my enemy's death, but I soon discovered, what I had been too much engaged to observe before, viz. Joe, the Indian, by my side. It was the flash of the blade of his tomakawk I had noted, as it descended upon the bear's skull and administered to my enemy his *coup de grâce.*

My rescuer was almost as upset as I was, for as he expressed it, he feared he had not time to get up before the animal had a hold of me, when the odds were that I would be very " muche munched up."

To have been witness to this fight must have been very interesting, though scarcely as much so as to the participants. Joe had seen the whole encounter from the commencement, and asserted that my escape from the first rush of the quarry was owing to the log attached to the trap having caught in a snag, which upon inspection of the surroundings proved to be the case.

The Indian not having kept his appointment was accounted for by an otter having carried off one of his traps, the recovery of which had taken an hour ; thus he did not reach the bluff till some time after I left it. The confusion at the bower house told him the cause of my having started, so he hurried on my track, and, as the reader will see, just reached me in the nick of time.

From the date of the escape I have narrated, my dusky rescuer and myself became great friends and my constant companion upon all hunting expeditions, the first of which was to secure alive, if possible, the young bears whose dam we had slain. The task was not difficult, for the cubs were too young to be left to the responsible task of taking care of themselves. For days, and I fear during that time often without food, the poor little beasts wandered alone about their demesne, seeking for their slain mother. At last Prince came upon their trail and treed them. A skilfully handled axe soon laid their retreat low, when with a little difficulty, much snarling, and many scratches, they were secured and transported to the shanty. It was surprising how soon they became tame, and thoroughly reconciled to their new home, where they proved to be most interesting pets; their besetting fault being jealousy of any attention shown the numerous pets I then possessed. A young otter, almost full grown, they particularly detested, and no wonder, for his teeth were sharp as needles, and he never had the slightest hesitation in giving them practical demonstration that such was the case.

These battles generally resulted, I must say, from the bear cubs being the offenders. They were particularly fond of fish, and so was the otter. Now the latter was permitted to go about loose, and as a well stocked lake was at the door of the shanty, many a fine white fish or mascalonge was brought home. After the trouble of making these captures, the fisherman doubtless expected to enjoy the result in peace, and as his appetite required; but this was what the bears would not permit, and as they got older and stronger, it became no easy matter to resist them; so the otter ultimately ceased to bring home his prey, and finally deserted me altogether.

Frequently, more particularly towards sundown, I used to see my old pet fishing in the adjoining bay, but no allurements would bring him back. It is quite possible he conceived he had a grievance against me, because I divided my affections among too many. To do your memory justice you were always a kindly beast, and willing to give up whatever you had when your master required it.

I had at that time also a pair of young beavers; they were most interesting pets but very mischievous, for they would gnaw the legs of tables and chairs with equal industry, and had a *penchant* at night, if shut up in a room, to gather every available cushion or rug and place them against the crevice under the door as if with the intention of shutting out the draught. Their demonstrations of affection were also frequently too fulsome, and thus required repressing; in this course it was difficult to find a medium, for if done gently they would pay no attention to me, if sharply, they would sulk for several hours, when they would deny themselves their most favourite food. The young bears seemed to treat them as quite unworthy of any consideration, but possibly this might have been assumed, as a trick that was afterwards perpetrated by them on the beavers induces me to imagine.

To keep the young rodents out of the house as much as possible, I had a long box lined with tin made for their habitation; at the upper end there was a comfortable dormitory, the under end being partially immersed in water. This I had placed upon a slope, so that the box could be raised or lowered at will, by means of a rope attached to the limb of a tree. The gravity of the box would always take it as far into the water as desirable, thus it was ever necessary to see that the rope was securely tied to prevent the misfortune of the cage floating out to sea. Now it was just such an accident as this that happened; the rope was cut, the box floated off, and the beavers inside were consequently drowned. I have no doubt that the bears *did* gnaw the rope through, in fact such was the opinion of every one, but whether they did so out of a spirit of mischief, or to relieve themselves of the presence of rivals to their master's attention, I leave the reader to judge. During the life time of my drowned favourites I observed many most interesting traits in their character. First was their excessive cleanliness both in habits and in what they ate; secondly, their industry in their undertakings; thirdly, their skill in cutting down timber, so as to make it invariably fall in such a position as to give them the least possible exertion to float the limbs to where they were wanted. Their usual food was the inner bark of the willow and poplar, yet they evinced a great love for bread and milk, and while drinking it kept constantly emitting a purring sound, no doubt intended to express their satisfaction. They never objected to Prince feeding out of the same dish with them, nor did he to joining them at such a repast, but if the bears appeared, universal indignation was expressed at their intrusion, in which Prince was sure to take a prominent part, and no wonder was it that these cleanly animals did so, for never was there such a pair of slobbering, dirty feeders, gifted with such voracious appetites as these children of the forest. As the bears increased in age, and consequently in size and strength, they became somewhat difficult to manage, but as one straw is said to break the camel's back, their last offence could not be overlooked. It had both a comical and serious aspect, very amusing perhaps to an overlooker, but excessively trying to the sufferer.

At great expense, my friend with whom I resided, had procured a hive of bees in the spring of the year. It was supposed that they had done exceedingly well during the summer, and that by this time they had collected a large quantity of honey. Now, it being an assumed fact that my bears knew nothing about bees and honey, no one contemplated the possibility of these inquisitive, long-haired rogues interfering with the hive. However, from a spirit of devilment, or having smelt the precious sweet store within, they upset the bee-hive just as our venerable housekeeper was passing, who was forthwith assailed by the irate swarm and stung most painfully.

Naturally enough, she screamed out, which brought my friend and self to the rescue, when we encountered a repetition of her misfortune. Probably as I was first on the scene I received the greatest amount of attention from the infuriated insects, the result of which was that I was laid up for a couple of days, but my friend lost both bees and honey. As for the young rascals the perpetrators of all this mischief, they appeared to have escaped untouched, but what can be expected of the scions of such a race, when the mature animals think nothing of descending a hollow tree in search of their favourite luxury, honey, rump foremost in defiance of a thousand assailants.

For this climax to their misdeeds the cubs were presented to Joe the Indian, who transferred them to a trader, who ultimately sold them to a collector in the service of the Amsterdam Zoological Gardens. In Holland they arrived safe and sound, and may at this date be eating buns from the hands of innumerable fat and phlegmatic Dutch boys and girls.

For one who is fond of field sports, is an ardent admirer of nature in her most lovely moods, does not object to solitude, and can put up with a rough dwelling and coarse but wholesome fare, there are many charms to be found in a life on a farm in the backwoods of Canada.

CLAW IN LION'S TAIL.

A WELL-KNOWN author does me too much honour in being prepared to accept my dictum on the question, Is there a claw in a lion's tail? but I must remind him that I only answer from my own experiences, which may be very dissimilar to those of other persons.

A quotation which he takes from Sir Samuel Baker's work, "Wild Beasts and their Ways," I had better repeat for the sake of lucidity. "The often questioned thorn in the extreme end of a lion's tail is by no means a fallacy; this is a distinct termination in a sharp horny point, which, although only a quarter of an inch or less in length, is most decided. I do not consider that there is any special use for this termination, any more than there would be for the tuft of black hair which forms the extremity, and which conceals the thorny substance."

Now, the first sentence of this passage deals with the subject most diplomatically—that is to say, non-committally, and is quite as succinct as the majority of readers require. At the same time, if precision is demanded, horn or horny is not the exact word to employ. Further, I do think that the "tuft of black hair which forms the extremity" has its use, viz. to protect the termination of the tail from an excess of violence.

Under a *nom de plume*, a well-known shootist—not sportsman—in a letter to me uses the words prickle and thorn, in reference to the subject in question; in his adoption of these words he differs from me in the way that I would apply them, for the first is an excrescence attached to the bark or skin of a plant, as, for instance, in the rose bush, while the other is an excrescence which comes directly from the wood of the tree or shrub, as in the blackthorn. Therefore spike or claw are entirely inappropriate (according to my views) in an attempt to give anything like a precise portrayal of the subject in question. As the former must be made of metal or wood, the latter formed of horn, neither of which is the case in the disputed point. Still I believe, viz. that the end of the tail of a lion becomes callous, and more and more indurated towards the tip, where the fibre or grain of the skin becoming altered in its growth direction, by meeting from the reversed sides, forms a corn. The result of this is that the scales of the callosity, which, at first, are parallel with the vertebræ, increase crossways, and so form the termination. This irregularly formed callosity can be picked into innumerable pieces by the human nail, as the laminæ do not repose in regular strata. That the termination of the lion's tail, when thus furnished, is used as an agreeable perturbator to the interior of the owner's ear, or perchance to disturb the enjoyment of a voracious tick on some portion of the proprietor's person, inaccessible to claws or mouth, even as a tooth-pick on urgent occasions, I cannot say, but I feel convinced that it would be utterly worthless for any purpose where strength and adhesion are required.

A callosity from a Barbary lion's tail, which I examined carefully through a microscope with the late Mr. Frank Buckland, exactly corresponded with those I procured in South Africa. Further, I have found the same formation on a domestic cat, and am informed that it is developed to a greater extent in the veritable wild cat.

In my first letter to the press upon this subject, I alluded to the belief that that wonderful romancer, "Buffon," entertained on this and many other subjects, however it was excised, either as being deemed irrelevant, or from want of space, or from a spirit of jealousy that actuated a very ignorant editor. My opinion of this once popular naturalist is not, I know, exceptional, for I have frequently heard him spoken of by scientists of the "first water" in much stronger and far more condemnatory terms.

However, after all that has been written or said upon this question, permit me to conclude by stating that I cannot help thinking that the whole might be summed up thus, that prickles, thorns, spikes, and claws are, in this instance, "distinctions without a difference," and that each term is used with the intention of misleading the general reader.

FEROCITY OF EAGLES.

A French gentleman, the descendant of refugees, and the owner of extensive tracts of wild land, brought me a bull terrier pup from Toronto. This dog, when it grew up, was not only the wisest, but the most courageous beast I had ever seen. He could retrieve on land and from water, "tree" partridges, kill a fox, woodchuck, or porcupine, and make it so hot for a bear's rump that Bruin was always glad to avail himself of the shelter of the first tree he could reach. In fact, I believe that this dog knew every word that was said to him; one thing I can assert, that when hunting matters were being talked over, he would listen as attentively, and with as thorough an expression of intelligence as would many a human being. I could write for hours of the merits of my old favourite, but fear it would be as tedious to my readers as I know it sometimes is to my friends. Alas! poor Snow (he was white, with a brindle patch on his left ear and side of the head), your life was a short one, but your old master will never forget you.

If you take the map of Ontario, you will find, a hundred and fifty miles north of Orillia, a network of lakes, whose waters communicate with the Ottawa River. Here I was shooting "flappers," and the birds had been unusually plentiful. Snow had lots of work to do retrieving, and hustling the young birds out of cover. Close up to the shoulder I winged a young duck. The locality of the wound prevented it diving much, still it managed to make considerable progress over the surface of the water, so that it was at least a hundred yards out in the lake before it was laid hold of. I had observed previously a white-headed eagle hovering overhead, just sufficiently distant to be out of shot. Well, I thought I knew what the villain was after, for frequently before that day they had robbed me of wounded "fowl," but I had a new experience now to learn. With a swoop, as remarkable for its velocity as the fish-hawk's, tern's, or gannet's, it descended, I supposed for the bird ; no such thing, the dog was the object of its attack. There was no hesitation displayed, no vacillation of purpose ; Snow was pressed down for some moments beneath the surface of the water, and in an instant after his assailant arose, taking my poor dog aloft with him. The victim, as far as I could distinguish, had no power to make an effective resistance, although he struggled with considerable energy, as he was held by one of the talons across the neck, while the other grasped the small of the back. When an elevation of over a hundred feet had been obtained by the assailant and victim, I fired both barrels over the bird. The shots, which could have no injurious effect at such long range, caused the eagle to relinquish hold of his prey, but scarcely had the terrier reached the water when he was again seized, this time by the head and back, and taken off to the other side of the lake, in spite of the two bullets I fired at long range after them.

I was utterly powerless to assist my favourite, for no canoe was at hand, and if it had been I doubt very much indeed whether I could have rendered effective aid.

At my request, that afternoon two of the Indians crossed the lake, to learn, if possible, further particulars of my pet's fate. Evidence was abundantly found that the dog had been torn to pieces to afford a meal for two eaglets, which the red men despatched, but not without being attacked by the parent, which in turn also succumbed under a violent blow it received on the head from a deftly-wielded blow of a club. It was a poor solatium for my loss, yet it was assuredly a slight satisfaction to obtain the revenge that I did.

If the dog had not been in the water, and so placed at the utmost disadvantage, the result would probably have been different, even if the two combatants had been left to fight it out alone, for Snow was equal to any emergency that his weight and size could successfully combat with.

There is no doubt but that many Indian children are killed in their infancy by white-headed eagles. Among the Chippewas, which were the tribe I was then principally acquainted with, late in spring, when these people returned to their fixed dwellings, at the conclusion of the winter hunt, narratives of the misdeeds produced by these predatory birds were far from uncommon. This is the way that these disasters generally happen. When a papoose is born, the squaw, for facility of transport, straps the child upon a board, which is covered with an ample padding of moss. The husband kills a cariboo, or moose. Sufficient for a meal he fetches home with him, then sends his wife "to pack" the remainder of the carcass to camp. After both have fed to repletion, the "good man" goes to sleep, while the woman starts on a tramp through the woods, or over the barrens, to fetch home the remainder of the meat. Not to be hampered with additional and unnecessary weight, and, further, to be secure from the attack of the first ravenous grey wolf that should chance to skulk about the camp, the papoose is hung up to the limb of an adjoining tree till the maternal parent returns from her toil. The infant is completely helpless in its position, and the white-headed eagle avails itself of the chance thus afforded it. The eyes of the victim are soon torn out and devoured, as well as such portions of the body as can be got at. Indian women are seldom very affectionate mothers, and such occurrences are considered *contretemps* naturally attached to the life they lead.

A PERFECT SHOT.

FOR some time a discussion was carried on in some of our principal periodicals upon the above subject, but the matter now slumbers, and unfortunately does so before a satisfactory conclusion has been arrived at. Such being so, I will not quote past writers, or express belief or disapproval of their various convictions, but give my own ideas, wishing them only to be accepted for what they may be deemed worth.

To become perfect in the use of the gun, you must commence your education at an early date in life. Of course some pupils are more apt than others, while dunces are to be found occupying as prominent a place in the study of the science of gunnery as are to be discovered among the students of algebra or Euclid, Greek or Latin. This, I think, can generally be traced in both cases to the result of a natural incompetency for their tasks, their hearts not being in their work.

Believe me, there is no more a royal road to excellence in the art of shooting than there is to any other study, and to become a marksman of note, you must commence your initiatory instructions with the simplest of lessons, gradually advancing till you attain such excellence that nothing on the wing or on foot can escape your deadly aim, provided always that it be within range.

After this brief preamble, I will endeavour, in as few words as possible, to come to the point.

A person who reads well, does not puzzle over each letter that composes a word, or each word that makes up a sentence, although the last may be as tortuous as can be selected in Browning's or Tennyson's works. No! The moment the eye passes over it, the mind embraces the meaning of the author that you are perusing.

With writing it is the same. The formation of a letter, spelling of a word, construction of a sentence, never delays the pen of the educated man; the mind knows and arranges what it wishes to indite, and the hand without hesitation performs what is required of it.

This skill in reading and writing is the result of long and patient study.

To become *perfect* in the *art* of *shooting* requires very much the same attention.

A bird flushes close to you and at once commences to tower; your mind grasps in a moment what aim is necessary, and both hand and eye do their bidding. Again, the sportsman has cross shots, some to the right, some to the left, some passing at right angles, others at more less acute or obtuse angles; again the mind seizes instantaneously what has to be done, and the hand and eye prove themselves willing, prompt, and dexterous servants.

The two best shots I ever met with were both Americans, and both were as skilful with the rifle as with the shot gun—a rather unusual occurrence. I I do not think that I am incorrect in saying that both paid more attention in their youth to the study of field sports than they did to their books. The one was Mr. Nathaniel West, Kent, Indiana, the other Mr. William Holland, Yazoo City, Mississippi.

In the longest day, whether the game were geese, grouse, or wildfowl, it was a very rare event to see a wing-tipped or legged bird. Mr. Bogardus, if I remember correctly, knew both well.

People learning to shoot late in life may become fair shots, sometimes even something better than what this expression indicates, but I am certain that they will never attain professors' chairs in the Art of Shooting.

HABITAT OF SPRINGBOK—SIZE OF AFRICAN OTTERS.

A VALUABLE correspondent, and former hunting companion on the veldt, makes some inquiries about the above animals, which he will thank me to answer.

The habitat of the springbok has never to my knowledge been defined, although the usual belief is that it confines itself to "the desert," or to such countries as lay upon its immediate margin. This, however, is an error, for I have seen this beautiful creature close to Bedford and Craddock, Eastern Province, Old Colony; and certainly, to reach the first-named, it had passed through belts of bush and timber, formerly giraffe country, and very unlike its home on the Kalihari or the Karroo district.

Again, I have found the springbok in the Mappani bush country, considerably to the eastward of Kama's possessions, and even in tolerably thick-wooded lands in the same "march," a section of territory at one time justly celebrated for the large numbers of giraffes that frequented it. When the natives make drives there—far from an unfrequent occurrence—all varieties of game that are started before the beaters crowd together, and the same not unfrequently occurs when riding down the larger *boks* and giraffes, until the individual you intend to kill is severed from them, and among these crowds the springbok is frequently found.

Again, the giraffe is found in "the desert," where trees are scarce, and the principal part of the sustenance of these mammoths of creation is cropped from bushes seldom over three feet high. There, again, giraffes and springbok may be seen together. For confirmation of this refer to the works of Sir Cornwallis Harris and Mr. Charles John Andersson.

Further, I have a note in my diary stating that when travelling between Sechellis and Bamamwato I saw large numbers of springbok, a good many gemsbok, three ostriches, and several giraffes, near a vley called "Seruley," all apparently in company.

The residence of bush pigs is very uncertain as to locality. I have found them both in open *veldt* and bush *veldt*. One *sine qua non*, however, is necessary, viz., water. Thus they may be often started when driving other game, when, if they cannot gain their earths, they will join the other animals of the plains in the general stampede.

That the lordly giraffe should stoop its graceful and towering head to playfully and affectionately nibble fleas out of the springbok's back, or that the same gentle, affectionate, and timid mammoth should, with trusting feelings of universal love, lend its legs to the bush pigs as scrubbing posts, I do not intend to infer, so beg that my remarks are not misconstrued.

As to the question regarding the otter, such a giant never came under my observation in South Africa or elsewhere, as my correspondent says he has seen, viz., sixty pounds in weight, although I have caught, shot, and purchased the skins of a great many in both hemispheres. According to my experience, the average length of these animals, including tails, is just under four feet, and the weight about twenty pounds.

I had an otter caross of very large size, and now in the possession of a friend, which took about forty skins to make it; but I had all white markings carefully eliminated before the pelts were stitched together. As a specimen of South African fur, it was a very superior article, but had to be retanned on arrival at home, as the native dressing, however excellent in its own land, will not stand the damp of our climate.

DOG-BREAKING.

A DIVERGENCE of opinion between two of my friends on the above subject is amusing, more especially to me that has had experience in the *science* of dog-breaking, for it is easily to be seen that both are right, and therefore that the respective modes that they recommend would prove successful—only, however, with dogs of perfectly different temperament.

As there are human beings of all sorts and conditions, so there are dogs ; thus, where punishment will succeed with one, it will fail with another ; where coaxing will be awarded success with one, it will be entirely thrown away upon another ; where reliance upon affection to obtain a desired result from one is successful, that method of treatment will be utterly useless with another. To mitigate trouble in breaking dogs, and, therefore, to arrive at the result desired in the shortest possible space of time, the character of your animal should be studied, and there is no time more appropriate for that purpose than when the initiatory process of "home or house breaking" takes place, then you can learn without fail which is to be repressed or which encouraged.

I had two brothers, and both dogs turned out as good and staunch as could be desired by the most fastidious sportsman. In their early lessons in retrieving, Beau had at first to be rounded up by a whipper-in, while Muff, if so treated, dropped his bird, and timorously came to heel. Both I made companions of, and each evinced equally their attachment to me. Relying upon Muff's affection, when he dawdled over fetching a bird, I would conspicuously change my route, and take trouble to evince that I was totally indifferent to his conduct. This course soon brought him to me, when, if not noticed, he took every means to inform me of his return. Then succeeded a word or two of commendation, after which he would renew quartering his beat with additional energy. Neither of the early errors of these dogs would I denominate cussedness—that American expression meaning "*contrariness*"—but ignorance of the knowledge that while on duty they must not play. A most important thing in dog-breaking is to get the animal that you are educating to understand what you want done, and my very long and varied experience has taught me that as soon as you succeed in this, nowhere will you find a more prompt or ready servant to obey your behest.

A well-known sportsman says, that when the bird has been dilatorily retrieved, address the dawdler in endearing baby language, to encourage him to prompter efforts in the future. Now, I hold that it is impossible to be too concise and distinct in the language that the breaker applies on all occasions to dogs. If one word can be substituted for three, or three for nine, invariably make a practice of doing so. Your manner and intonation when you express yourself will assuredly make up for your brevity, and never resort to the whip unless as a *dernier ressort*. I hold that dogs and horses—the most valuable and affectionate of the servitors of the human family—have but to be convinced of the earnestness of their owner's purpose and know what he demands of them, when they will do their utmost to gratify his desires.

CAPTIVE EAGLE.

My father was a military man, and, as often happened nearly forty years ago, his family lived within barracks. The regiment to which he belonged was stationed at one time in the north of Scotland. In the fort was a canteen, and attached to it a yard for the stowage of barrels, empty cases, etc. This enclosure was surrounded by very high walls, and in it was kept one of the finest and largest specimens of the golden eagle that I ever remember to have seen. Its favourite perch was an old box, from which it would eye askance, and not without looks of ferocity, any person that entered its habitation. I know that we youngsters used to regard it with feelings of considerable trepidation. That it would have attacked and killed a child I have not the smallest doubt.

On raw flesh this bird was principally fed, rats also formed no small part of its diet, but when a cat could be procured, it was turned loose into the yard, when it was at once seized and transported to the favourite perch. The unfortunate victim, as soon as it became aware of the presence of its foe, would make the most frantic efforts to escape, but never for a moment sought to defend itself. However, its struggles were of short duration after being pounced upon, the terrible talons doing quickly and surely the work of destruction, these formidable weapons often meeting through the cat's body. There was an old major in the regiment who had a pet tom-cat, a splendid animal, and unusually large. It was a very great favourite with its master, and proportionately disliked by everybody else, for it frequently made night hideous with its caterwauling. No rival would this beast permit to approach it when engaged upon its amatory excursions, which were so frequent that it was called Sultan.

It would be difficult to say whether my companions feared or hated this cat most; however, the major's pet bore a very bad reputation among my chums, so it was resolved to get rid of him on the first favourable occasion. Such an undertaking was found easier to plan than to carry out. The big boy of our party was found equal to the occasion. His father was an ardent Waltonian, so possessed every implement that was necessary to successfully practise his hobby. From this stock a large landing net was purloined, and, in an unguarded moment, the obnoxious tom-cat was covered with it, and soon after, with considerable trouble, transferred to a bag, in which unfortunate Sultan was carried to the canteen. His weight and great strength caused all to think that he would at least make a gallant fight for his life, but such, to the great disappointment of all, was not the case. The eagle had him in his terrible grip in an instant, and the poor unfortunate looked quite incapable of making an effort to save himself.

A very melancholy little tragedy occurred in reference to this bird. A lieutenant had a pure-bred Skye terrier, which was an universal favourite, for it was the essence of pluck, good temper, and sagacity, When "Skye's" master was on duty one day, the dog, by some unaccountable means, got into the eagle's yard. The poor little fellow was not long missed when search was made for him, and to the owner's, and I may say the whole garrison's immense grief, was found in the bird's clutches—dead, of course.

The subject of this narrative finally escaped, and was said to have been recognized by many that knew it, in the vicinity of Cromarty Firth. Supposing that no mischance befell it, at the present day it may be frequenting the desolate rock-bound coast of that arm of the sea, for they are supposed to live to a very great age.

In later years, when enjoying myself with my gun in the West of Scotland, I have had a wounded hawk, or even an owl, fasten with their claws upon me, and found their hold exceedingly difficult to undo ; the wound they effected being not unfrequently deep, and always very painful. As I am an amateur taxidermist, a desire not to injure the plumage of my specimens exposed me to these disagreeable consequences. When such is the power of doing injury, possessed by these comparatively small birds, the destructive capacity of an eagle can well be understood.

WEIGHT OF ELEPHANTS' TUSKS.

THE tusk which Mr. E. G. Loder exhibited to the Zoological Society in 1888, although an unusually large one, is far from being heavier than others that have found their way to some of the south-eastern ports of South Africa. On the occasion that it was shown to that eminent body of *savants*, I called the attention of the Press to this point, at the same time mentioning larger ones that I was cognizant of. Since then I had two letters from the Zambesi, confirming what I stated at that time. Mr. Loder's tusk, I believe, weighed 184 lbs., but being much worn at the point, was evidently the working instrument of the beast that produced it; thus, if its fellow, the non-working one, had been obtained, it would doubtless have scaled four additional pounds.

At the present moment I cannot lay my hands upon some notes that I made in Zambesia, thus I have to write from memory. The late George Wisbeach, the most eminent and successful of all the interior traders, and who first opened up the country between the Zambesi and Limpopo to commerce, when in partnership with "Elephant" Philips, purchased a pair of tusks from Simpopo, then king on the north side of the great river, which weighed respectively 204 lbs. and 198 lbs. They were afterwards sold to Messrs. Francis and Clarke, the principal merchants at Bamanwato, and but for the fact that that firm has for some years been broken up, there is little doubt that confirmation of my statement could easily have been obtained from them. The difference in weight between these tusks was the result of one being considerably worn at the point, indicative that it was the implement used in unearthing favourite edible roots and tubers.

The father of Kama, whom I made the acquaintance of at Machapin's Kraal, on the Notawani River, Tropical South Africa—whither he had been expelled by his son—told me of larger tusks than those I have mentioned, and the old man was a most artful and knowing trader. As he had nothing to gain by telling me an untruth, I am inclined to think that he did not lie.

As the Portuguese have had settlements for about three hundred years on the south-east coast of Africa, and, at one period, had all the ivory trade in their hands, I am disposed to believe the report that, at one time, there was a tusk of 200 lbs. in a museum in Lisbon, for I have seen it alluded to in standard works printed seventy or eighty years ago, but it has probably long since been sold, for its unusual size would make it of great value.

I would say here that I do not like a doubt of the veracity of Gordon Cumming to be even whispered. I am aware that he had many faults, but telling untruths, I think, was not among them. Why I speak so positively I will state. Fourteen years ago I hunted through what was his favourite tract of country, and at Koorooman, Sechelles, and Soochong, made the acquaintance of many of his attendants, who, without exception, confirmed all of his marvellous stories; even the chiefs I have cross-questioned on this subject, and they endorsed their people's assertions. I have never even heard one of the missionaries, much as they disliked the man, doubt Gordon Cumming's word, and he told me that he once possessed a tusk that scaled 208 lbs.

It is a great mistake to think that the largest elephants produce the heaviest tusks, for such is not the case. The loftiest elephants probably in the world were to be found, a few years back, on the banks of the Limpopo. Livingstone speaks of one he saw there, and measured, after its death, which exceeded 12 ft. in height, and I am certain that I have seen several that were not far from that enormous stature. Now an Indian elephant that measures 10 ft. 2 in. is a very big specimen of its species. Jung Bahadoor is said to have had one that stood 10 ft. 6 in. Roughly speaking, therefore, the reader can calculate that there is a difference of five or six hands in the height of the respective breeds, as much difference, say, as between a twelve-hand pony and an eighteen-hand horse. The observer who has seen representatives of the two breeds side by side will be struck with amazement.

But returning to the ivory question, the mammoths of the Limpopo did not carry big tusks, seventy or eighty pound ones amongst them being deemed unusually heavy. No; to obtain the heaviest ivory the hunter had to cross the Zambesi, or trade with those chiefs whose hunting veldt was on the north side of that river, and the bulls that produced the weightiest tusks there do not exceed in height the Indian representative of the genus by more than a hand and a half, or possibly two hands.

Of course the reader knows that, with very rare exceptions, cow elephants in Africa carry ivory, but it is small, averaging less than sixteen pounds in the mature animal. Nevertheless, they are most formidable weapons, as many a hunter and horse have found out to their cost. Those cows that are tuskless are invariably barren, and are justly more feared by the sportsman than the other members of her race.

It would be interesting to know the correct height of Jumbo, his age, and from what part of Africa he was brought, and whether he ever exhibited any desire to fraternize with any of his Indian relations owned by the Zoological Society.

The African elephant, when captured young, is very easily domesticated, but whether it would retain its mild disposition after reaching maturity, is a question that yet remains unsolved. I have several times possessed calves from thirteen to fourteen hands high, and their affection for myself, servants, and more particularly the children that accompanied their parents on my hunting expeditions, was constantly being displayed. One young elephant in particular was never more happy than when playing with a lot of these black brats of the human race, who would mount the young pachyderm's back till there was no more room to find a perch. If the little beast thought itself overloaded, or that the joke was being carried too far, it would drag them from their elevated position, and gently deposit them upon the ground. Supposing this calf had grown to twelve feet in height, and retained his amiable disposition and fearlessness, what a grand beast he would have been for " shikar " purposes.

INSTRUCTIONS FROM WILD BEASTS AND THEIR WAYS.

In Sir Samuel Baker's book, which bears the above title, there is collected a vast deal of interesting matter, particularly to the neophyte in foreign field sports.

As the work interested me very much, I wish to call the general reader's attention to apparently one or two trifling matters, but which are in reality of great importance to all who use the shot-gun, more especially if they employ that popular weapon in foreign countries.

Before going further, I desire to state that I am a great advocate for using ball, when such can be done effectively. At the same time, I have been placed in positions where buckshot alone could be relied upon for executing my work. Such being the case, I will presume to offer some suggestions to the novice, both as to the most suitable weapon for shooting buckshot, and how to load the shells, so as to condense the pattern of the projectiles, and, at the same time, obtain the greatest amount of penetration.

In shooting large mould shot, big-bored guns show themselves to great advantage, especially when they are possessed of short barrels, which are choked, provided the manufacturer of the weapon knows the exact measurements that the interior of the barrels should be made to assume. If this is done to a nicety, the same gun will make admirable shooting with either small drop, or mould shot. Thus the sportsman can be owner of an arm, possessed of the unusual qualifications of being thoroughly reliable upon either intermediate or small game. In the old muzzle-loading days this was impossible, for different boring was *required for different-sized missiles;* hence the *forte* of one gun would obviously be in shooting small shot; another when a larger grain was employed. Short barrels were not efficacious with mould shot when the old type of weapon was in vogue, for although with them you obtained power, it was impossible to get a good target, even at comparatively short range. But do not let the reader be led away with the impression that such a weapon as I assert can be built, is suitable for stalking red deer, or antelope on large open plains, for it is not, but in wooded *kloofs*, thick bush *veldt*, or lofty grass, where the range is necessarily short, and shooting of necessity quick—particularly if in the hands of nervous or unsteady sportsmen—under such circumstances it will prove its superiority.

I have shot wild boar, bears, deer, and a panther, with buckshot in such positions that the rifle could only be used effectively by an absolute proficient in handling that weapon. Of course, it will be understood from this that the ranges were invariably short —say under twenty yards—and death was, with one exception (that of the panther), an immediate result. There were circumstances surrounding the slaying of that beast that accounted for this exceptional occurrence. I several times sighted small portions of the hide of this animal through a thick growth of oleander bushes, as it passed across my front, but the shrubs grew so densely that I deemed it impossible to take a satisfactory aim. At length it crossed an opening about a foot in diameter. This I availed myself of, but the charge was lodged too far back—a short distance behind the ribs, so made a fearful wound. Death must have supervened in a short time, yet, although the poor creature was thoroughly incapacitated of doing mischief, I had to give it the other barrel to put an end to the gruesome sight. Those who have not experienced knowledge of what a charge of buckshot can do at short range would be astonished on witnessing its effect.

It is with this knowledge that I endorse Sir Samuel Baker's advice to have a shot-gun in your howdah loaded with buck-shot, to use as a *dernier ressort.*

But there is a way to load such a gun as will give results very much in excess of the ordinary methods adopted. It is this. If using a ten, or any other bore, find out how many grains of a certain sized shot will chamber in the barrels, *id est*, how many will sit closely—without jamming—in the shell upon the wads covering the explosive. Having placed the bottom layer—of three or four pellets, according to the size used—in its proper place, sprinkle it over with a thin coating of fine sawdust slightly pregnated with grease, then add further layers treated in the same manner, till you have four, when finish off your cartridge. If more layers of shot are added, the pattern will very much suffer. The most convenient way to add the grease to the sawdust is to heat the latter as much as you can without igniting it, and then stir it round for some minutes with a modern kerosene candle. If loader wishes to be expeditious, the candle can be also warmed. The pellets must not be jammed in tight, but simply lay upon those underneath them, care being taken that each occupies its respective place. This can easily be ascertained with the point of your little finger, or with a piece of wood resembling a pipe tobacco-stopper.

The advice Sir Samuel Baker gives in reference to handling the knife when the sportsman gets into difficulties, should be written in diamond letters on every neophyte's memory.

COVER FOR GAME.

NOVEMBER is the season for obtaining, in America, the seed both of the blue grass and bunch grass. The former is produced in Kentucky and Tennessee, the latter upon the far western prairies and part of the Rocky Mountains. Both these grasses are very hardy and are excellent feed for stock of every description, as well as producing food and splendid cover for all varieties of game. Care must, however, be taken by the experimentalist that the seeds of these plants be ploughed in with a circular furrow, for if the furrow should be straight it will be adopted as a pathway by the game, and so facilitate running, ever certain to result in long and difficult shots.

The rougher the surface of the soil is, the better—in fact it can scarcely be too much so; if unsightly to the eye, immediately after being turned over, wind, rain, and frost will soon again render it comparatively level.

The blue grass I would prefer planted upon uplands, the bunch grass at greater altitudes, particularly such as receive an abundance of mid-day sun.

Now for the water celery (*Valisneria aquatica*), the most attractive of all lures to wild fowl. The best place to get this plant is upon the Susquehana bank, at the upper end of the Chesapeake Bay. To obtain it, all diving ducks will run any amount of risks. As food it possesses the most fattening effect upon the half-starved migratory birds that feed upon it for a week or two, as after that space of time they will be found in prime condition. Moreover, the flavour of the plant impregnates the flesh with a bouquet exquisite to the palate of the most fastidious epicure.

Planted in brackish water, with an alluvial bottom, where there is not too much tideway, it is sure to do well, and rapidly increase.

As to wild rice, I have expressed my belief so often in approval of its introduction that it seems superfluous to write more on the subject. The best mode of transporting it is to knead it into loaves composed of clay. These must be kept dry to prevent too rapid sprouting. The marshy edges of lakes and rivers are the most suitable places to distribute it.

The sage plant (*Artimesia*), found on the eastern spurs of the Rocky Mountains, forms good cover. It will grow anywhere, even where the soil is constantly parched with drought. Many kinds of game feed upon it, but the result is that their flesh receives a very unpleasant flavour by the proceeding.

I think I have answered all the questions that have been put me by private correspondents, but if they desire further information on the foregoing subjects, pray let them address their communications to my publishers, and I will give them immediate attention.

FISHING ON THE NEPIGON.

THE Nepigon is, if not the best, at least one of the best trout rivers in the world, and long will it occupy this proud position, for its banks offer no attraction either to the agriculturist or lumberman, and its waters are so rough, and the channel so irregular and rocky, that the trout which find there a home, can laugh to scorn all the tricks and artifices of the netter. There are, however, drawbacks to the magnificent sport to be enjoyed upon this stream, viz., black flies, mosquitoes, and gnats; these are very troublesome, nay, a perfect plague throughout the whole Nepigon region, until the end of July, but after that month sport can be enjoyed without inconvenience or worry of any kind whatever. However, science and experience have at last discovered a partial protection from these dreadful winged pests, which may, I believe, be thoroughly relied upon, although I have not made a personal trial of it. This invaluable specific is eucalyptus oil—a cleanly lubricant (if any lubricant can be considered so), and not possessed of a disagreeable smell.

This paradise of the disciples of Isaak Walton is situated to the north of Lake Superior. Its latitude is 50·14, and longitude 88·40. A station bearing the name of Nepigon, on the Canadian Pacific, is in the heart of the region, and a note to Mr. W. M'Kirdy, a local merchant living at the station, will procure all the assistance and information that the visitor may require. This gentleman can be vouched for as thoroughly trustworthy as well as efficient. Trains leave Montreal and Ottawa twice a day, passing through this wild lake and river land, and to avoid being hampered with extra packages when crossing the Atlantic, I may say that rods, fishing-tackle, etc. —in fact, all the hundred-and-one little trifles that make a fisherman's kit complete—can either be obtained in New York or Montreal of most excellent quality and at moderate prices.

The artificial flies to be employed on the Nepigon are identical in colour with those that are most successful in the Scotch and north of Ireland rivers, viz., black, red, and ginger Hackles, Hare's-lug, etc., but all should be tied of a size just under those used for sea trout. If the Nepigon should chance to be very low, smaller sized flies than the above will be found effective, but on no account, whatever the state of the water may be, have upon your reel less than sixty yards of line, for eight-pound trout are not unknown here ; four and five-pounders are plentiful ; while nothing under one pound should ever see the inside of your creel.

The varieties of the *Salmonidæ* family to be obtained in these "Dominion" waters are almost identical with those in the Rangelah Lake district, State of Maine, although I do not think that they have yet been thoroughly studied, and, therefore, classified ; but of this Piscators may feel assured, that gamer, handsomer, or finer flavoured fish, never made acquaintance with the landing net.

Further, I should state that the fishing here is not alone confined to river work, for lakes open out in every direction, on which trolling with "shiners" or even "spoons" will afford no end of pleasure. From the middle of September to the middle of October I would deem the best time of the year to visit this favoured region, but if the season is late and happens to be a dry one, sport can be enjoyed for possibly a month later. Here a full river is to be dreaded, and a low one to be rejoiced over—rather the reverse of our long-established home ideas.

A BEAR ADVENTURE.

THE greater portion of the State of Maine, North America, is a perfect labyrinth of lakes. As may be imagined, they are of all sizes and shapes, and are as picturesque as rugged outlines, rocky shores, numerous islands, pellucid water, and abundant and varied trees can make them. Moreover, grand mountains look down upon these retreats of game and fish—mountains quite as sublime as any to be seen in the Highlands of Scotland, and infinitely more attractive to the human eye, for often they are wooded right to the summit. This is truly the land of the pine—the houses, the forests, and even the very lakes smell of it, and a more delicious or health-giving odour does not exist in any part of the world that I know of.

I was standing at the door of a wayside tavern, a genuine Yankee hostelry, for it was as clean and bright as paint and water could make it, when a visitor drove up in one of those ugly but handy traps, "a sulky." The burthen of his conversation with the landlord was about the size and quantity of trout that Reuben Aimes had caught the day before, at a pond (small lake) in the vicinity. There I and my chum determined to go next day, for although trout were more than abundant in our immediate neighbourhood, their average weight was little more than three-quarters of a pound.

We had some difficulty in finding the sheet of water we desired to wet our flies in, and doubt very much that we should have done so, but for the assistance of the "cutest" boy that I ever came across even in New England. That boy was a prodigy—in fact, too sharp in my belief to live long—for he had already in his head as much knowledge regarding woodcraft as few possess when they are called upon to quit the world. The lakelette in area did not cover fifty acres, but it was a *bijou* sheet of water, surrounded by birch, shumach, poplar, maple, hemlock, and pine forest, that ultimately lost their individuality far up the adjoining mountains' sides.

In the weather we were unfortunate. Not a breath of wind flecked the water, and the sky overhead was as clear as can ever be seen upon southern Mediterranean shores. From a raft we fished, but small fry only rose, and they were innumerable.

At length I thought that I would explore, and, if possible, find a tributary stream. In this I was successful, but trees, whortleberry bushes, and long hummock grass so margined the water that it was almost next to impossible to get my cast into it. At last, to my disgust, I hooked my flies in the top of a tamarack. With all my efforts I could not get them free, so the youngster was sent aloft to cast them off.

The place where I stood was hummocky—such lumps as you seldom come across, except in the wilds of America. With care, these overgrown excrescences could be traversed without wetting a foot, but hurrying would certainly bring you to grief, when over the boot-tops, if not to the knees, in slush, would be the consequence. I had stood several minutes for the boy to get the line loose, when from across the stream, and not far distant, I heard a sound much resembling an animal's grunt. Not being quite certain that my ears had not deceived me, I waited, when the grunt was repeated. By this time my line was undone, and my juvenile companion was descending, when I asked him to listen to the noise, for I felt convinced that it emanated from a bear feeding —enjoying his favourite *bonne bouche*, the whortleberries. "Bub" listened; Bruin gave another grunt, when the former, exclaiming "Bear!" slid down the tree with the agility of a monkey. As soon as he reached the ground, off he started down stream, followed—yes, followed by myself. It was a race for thirty or forty yards, but youth won the palm, although he had several falls in the struggle. Finally my *amour propre* asserted itself, or possibly I had become pumped, for I halted—not so my companion, he rapidly disappeared through the labyrinth of shrubs.

To my relief I found that no bear was in pursuit, so placing my rod against a stalwart hemlock, I ascended to its branches to take a view of the surroundings. For a long time I could not observe Bruin, but at length discovered a large mass of black fur, accompanied by two similar small ones which possessed animation, and were evidently engaged in search of food. They gradually quitted the damp, low-lying ground and gained an acclivity, where the largest beast commenced drawing broken fragments of "wind-falls" on one side, while the smaller ones feasted upon the beetles and grubs that thus became exposed to view.

The parent—for evidently such the larger one was —had neither heard nor winded us, so was perfectly ignorant that her industry and strength were forming a subject of wonder to a son of Adam. In the end their search for insects took the interesting family party out of view, so I descended to join my companions.

The day by this time was far spent, and, neither of us having arms, we hurriedly retraced our steps to the settlement, determined to revisit the scene on the morrow; this we did, and although accompanied by an experienced bear-dog, our search was unsuccessful. How often in my various and wide-scattered wanderings have I come across the most desirable game when least expected, and totally inadequately prepared to encounter it!

A PLEA FOR THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT.

I WISH I had the power to give my pen the voice of eloquence, for assuredly should I do so when writing upon this subject; but even possessed of the attributes which I desire, what can one person do to prevent that craving for slaughter, that all-absorbing desire for blood-shedding that is the ruling passion of nearly all persons—particularly so-called civilized and educated ones—when they have the chance presented to them of killing this grand mammoth of the brute creation.

The wealthy man anathematized the trader for shooting elephants for the sake of their ivory, yet the rich man does as bad, although he cannot plead that his subsistence depends upon his doing so. The professional elephant hunter is, as a rule, a rough and indifferently educated man, who adopts this very hardest of all businesses to obtain money to support him when age, exposure, and hardship has told upon his constitution, while the favoured son of fortune goes in for killing this game that he may boast of his prowess at his club, or exhibit his trophies to admiring relatives and guests. I leave it for the unprejudiced reader to judge which of these two types of men deserve the greatest amount of condemnation? To prevent controversy, often leading to bad and vindictive feelings, I will advance no arguments in favour of one or the other, but appeal to those that have it in their power, to put down with resolute, and unflinching severity, the destruction of this noble, sagacious creature, whether it be to obtain ivory or to secure trophies. Now, this is in the power of the New South African Company, and let them act at once, so that in the future they will not have to regret their procrastination.

At one time elephants were to be found all over the colony of the Cape of Good Hope, and where are they now? Exterminated, with the exception of a few specimens preserved in some districts. Two decades back there were plenty of these valuable beasts to be found in Bechuana Land and the Matabele country; there now, they are few and far between, but in Mashona Land, where the South African Company reigns paramount, the mammoth of terrestrial animals still exists in considerable numbers, and they are, without doubt, the finest and largest representatives of the race to be found in any part of the world; for instance, it is a large elephant that reaches the height of ten feet in India, while between the Limpopo and Zambesi it is not an uncommon occurrence to find them measure twelve feet in altitude.

There can be no shorter-sighted policy, no better example of killing the goose that laid the golden egg, than permitting these magnificent creatures to be killed or harassed out of their homes by so-called sportsmen and hunters. On the other hand, give the poor things protection, provide them with a sanctuary, and full well they will repay the trifling expense that would be attached to such a course.

But the question may be asked, how will they repay the cost and trouble, provided the above steps were taken? The answer is simple enough, by domesticating them and employing them in agriculture, in transport, in pageants, in destroying the carnivorous brutes, and, finally, as the instruments by which to explore every hole and corner in the unknown parts of the "dark continent."

Some persons assert that the African elephant cannot be tamed; this is stuff and nonsense. We have abundant proof that the ancients did it. Then why should not we? But if any fear should exist in reference to the males becoming troublesome at certain seasons, emasculate those that are not required for breeding purposes. It is no more cruel to do so to them than it is to our horses, and the result has been proved to be equally satisfactory. This information I derived from resident half-bred Portuguese on the Zambesi, and I have had it confirmed by countrymen who traded in that neighbourhood.

If the young are captured at an early age—speaking from my own knowledge—they soon become attached to all persons that treat them with kindness, and submit at once to be ridden or to carry a pad. With such a start, half the battle is fought, for, with constant handling and repetition of these exercises from childhood to maturity, there can scarcely be grounds for imagining that they would desire a life which they had forgotten, or to return to freedom, which they comparatively never knew. Arguments in favour of what I have written could be advanced without number. It remains to be seen whether the directors of the South African Company will profit by the above advice which I here tender them.

TWO SALMON ON ONE CAST.

OLD Dr. Clarke, of Maiden-lane, New York city (an Aberdeenshire man by birth), was a great and grand salmon fisherman. For years he and his brother rented the Grand Pabos river, that flows into the southern side of the estuary of the St. Lawrence. I remember asking him the question, "What would you do if you had two big fish on at the same time?" His answer was laconic, and, as I have proved, correct: "Play the nigh one gently, and let the de'il take care of the hindmost." Just so, say I. Two fish hooked upon the same cast will not act in concert, but drag and haul against each other, so that if you keep touch with the "muckle beast" next you, they will very soon exhaust each other, unless the line parts, a mishap ever to be dreaded, for there is unquestionably a very severe strain upon the six or seven feet of gut that intervenes between the respective captives when such an episode occurs.

In fishing the Mingan, Goodbout and Margarite—streams that feed the mouth of the St. Lawrence, on the north shore—some years ago, I frequently had the experience of hooking two salmon at the same cast, and unless the bank was precipitous, and was considerably elevated above the water line, or the fish took different sides of a boulder or "snag," and played a game of see-saw with your gut against those impediments, I always followed Dr. Clarke's advice, and invariably came out of the scrimmage victorious.

I have frequently debated in my mind whether it was most politic to use one or two flies when salmon fishing, more particularly where this species was numerous, or the river was filled with obstructions. On a clearish day, with a nice breeze, the bob-fly will rise and probably hook the most fish ; on the other hand, when the water is soiled from the effects of late heavy rains, the trail-fly will receive the most attention. Now, in either case a difficulty may occur, and in wild, strange waters it most frequently arises. It is this. The salmon on the bob-fly, when it feels the hook, makes a desperate effort for freedom, the trail-fly following its course like a pennant; should its point touch a stone or "snag," then, inevitably, smash will go your casting line. The same, of course, can occur to the bob-fly when you have a fish fast on the trail one, but my experience tells me not so frequently as in the first-mentioned instance.

Considering these possible mishaps, it would be an exceedingly nice and intricate piece of arithmetic to calculate whether the odds for making a heavy basket were more in your favour when fishing for salmon with one or two flies on your cast.

I have known good men and true espouse both sides of this question, and get extremely irate when they could not make converts of each other.

At Halifax, Nova Scotia, I made the acquaintance of as good a fellow and fisherman as I ever met. His temper was angelic on all subjects but that of using a bob-fly, but if any unfortunate should advance and approve of it, then it took an extra "tot," a pipe of strong tobacco, and two friends to keep him quiet. I knew that there must be some cause for this unusual excitement in one generally so amiable, so I inquired if it was not so, and requested him to state the facts. They are as follows :—When fishing in Norway on the Namsen, close under the Fiskum Foss, he hooked, and all but banked, a salmon 70lbs. weight, but lost it through the "d—d bob-fly" getting fast in some drift wood. "That fish, sir, would have beat the record to smash, and my name would have been immortalized but for that—" . . . .

The late Admiral Sir Hyde Parker is said to have killed a sixty-pounder on the same Norwegian river. The performance was a masterpiece of skill, as it broke two strands of the gallant gentleman's line in its efforts to get free. Somewhere I have an account of this wonderful performance, and will give it *in extenso* when I can lay my hands upon the manuscript.

By the camp-fire at night, a good song with a rattling chorus, if well sung, is very enjoyable. I will here give you one which my friend of Nova Scotia used to sing with great approbation of all listeners:—

Here's to the Namsen, of rivers the queen,
  Now to her boatmen so thrifty;
Here's to the salmon of pounds just fifteen,
  Though we'd rather hook one that weighs fifty.

Chorus.

The season is past, this throw is the last,
I'll warrant 'twill prove an excuse for the cast.

In spring this fine stream is discoloured by snow,
  Then the angler's disconsolate—very;
But the water once fine he forgets all his woe,
  And kills lots of fish, and is merry.

Here's to P——, who's the boy to play fish of good size;
  Here's to him who can rarely catch one, sir;
Here's to the muff who can scarce get a rise;
  And to him who works all day for none, sir.

For let them be salmon, or let them be peal,
  So long as they take silk and feather;
The music we love is the click of the reel,
  So as sportsmen we'll toast them together.

This was composed by a young University man when on the Namsen, and strange to say—it is affirmed—that his last cast killed a 26lbs. fish.

The average of the salmon in the Canadian rivers I do not think—judging from my own experience—exceeds 14lbs.

CURIOUS BELIEFS REGARDING SNAKES.

In nearly all countries that I have visited there exist many curious beliefs regarding snakes, and none is more prevalent than that certain kinds will suck milk from the udders of goats and cows. In fact, I have lately seen a woodcut, supposed to be old—aged nearly two hundred years—in which a very demure, but matronly cow is standing placidly chewing the cud, while a snake, obviously about six feet long, has her hind legs strongly enfolded by several laps of its body, while in the reptile's mouth is one of several large teats, apparently supplying willingly an abundance of the lacteal fluid. The drawing is a very coarse etching, but it unquestionably represents what the artist desired to portray. This itself, even if other proofs were wanting, would go to confirm that the story of snakes sucking mammals is not a fancy of modern days, but had its origin many years ago. This I do not quote as an argument of its truth, but as a curious circumstance that, after so long a lapse of time, plenty of people at the present day can yet be found who have a firm belief in such deeds taking place.

Another curious but firm persuasion also is common, viz., that there is a species of snake which takes its tail in its mouth, thus forming a ring, and pursues its victims relentlessly at the most wonderful pace. At the pretty village of Parish, on the southern side of the Vaal River, Orange Free State, in a canteen kept by a Boer, I saw a wonderful painting representing such a *contretemps* as it would be expected to occur where such a formidable brute had its existence. The artist who was answerable for this production was not without skill in the use of his pencil, and very lavish in the expenditure of his gorgeously-brilliant pigments. I offered to purchase the art treasure, and actually went as high as the price of two good fat *treck* oxen ; however, the owner could not be induced to sever connection with his valuable piece of property, although these people will generally sell anything they possess ; always excepting their *frows*, but then the grey mare here is almost invariably the better horse.

" *Vaat!* " exclaimed my host, indignantly ; then followed a vocabulary of choice Dutch oaths ; " sell my fader, *mein got!* vaat a man this *Englander* take me for ! "

I will attempt to describe the picture. In the foreground was a very obese woman with two daughters of equally rotundant proportions, their arms in the air, with a manner denoting great solicitude, the *stoup* of a house close by. A short way off, riding at full speed, was a burgher, with a paunch, cheeks, and limbs proportioned after the pattern of the renowned Johnny Gilpin. In his enormous fat hand was a powerful jambock, which he was using with great energy upon the flanks of a diminutive horse, as plump as a stall-fed bullock, while, close behind him, and in resolute pursuit, came the snake. But for its ample proportions it might have been taken for the driving wheel of a bicycle ; still, this error could scarcely occur to a close observer, for an enormous head, with wicked, glaring eyes, and some length of tail inserted into a half-open mouth, fringed with the cruellest fish-hook-curved teeth, was faithfully and conspicuously delineated. As it was obvious that I could not purchase the family relic, I praised it highly as a work of art, went into ecstasies over the ladies represented in it, noted the good seat of the rider, drew attention to the grand points of excellence in the nag, and almost shed tears over the terrible fate that seemed likely to befall the gallant burgher. My apparent pity for the plight that the late head of the household was in, and the depth and loudness of my adjurations against the hideous reptile, gained the household's goodwill; so, after sundry winks and *sotto voce* whispers, glasses and "square-face" were produced, over which I soon learned the whole story. That these good folks believed thoroughly what the artist had portrayed the juvenile part of the family proved, for they nearly wept over what must have been to them an oft-repeated tale. In fact, I will acknowledge that, but for my powerful and opportune embrace, the best looking of the daughters appeared very much as if she would have dropped on the ground in a swoon.

After the above incident I met many persons of different nationalities, who firmly believed in the existence of the hoop-snake—in fact, got quite indignant if I expressed the slightest doubt of its existence.

Another very curious snake is said to be not unknown, viz., the glass or broken serpent. If overtaken or surprised, it immediately breaks into numerous pieces, each about the size of a sausage, which endeavour to secrete themselves in the nearest available hiding-places. But if the intruder should remain still and silent, a slight whistling call of assembly will be heard, when soon after all the different bits will reunite themselves together, and afterwards make the best speed possible from the dangerous locality.

The next curious belief I know of is that there is supposed to be a snake of wonderful agility, and furnished with a most formidable spike on the termination of its tail, with which it transfixes travellers to the forest trees, after the performance turning the interior of its prey into a dwelling-place, therein to remain till another victim presents himself.

These legends are always to be heard, and obtain the greatest amount of credence, among a population Dutch by extraction, whether found in the United States or South Africa, therefore I presume that they had their origin in Holland. Whether or not, they are also firmly believed in by many of the uneducated Irish and Scotch in both countries. It would be extremely interesting to learn their antiquity, and by what cause they were conceived.

GUN-SHY DOGS.

In my lengthened experience I never knew but one dog that was coaxed out of that detestable failing, "gun-shyness," although I have known dozens and dozens of attempts being made to do so, and every system that reason could dictate brought to aid the desired purpose. The exception that I have alluded to was the case of a spaniel—one of the handsomest of the breed I ever saw—which was given me by a lady when I was in command of Rocky Island detachment, Cork Harbour. This animal was not only high-couraged, but a regular "out-and out rowdy." He would hunt from morning to night, appeared incapable of being fatigued, and never was happy unless crawling through gorse or struggling over or in the most dense or overgrown hedgerows. His ardour I believed to be irrepressible—but I found my mistake. Early one autumn day I resolved to pay a morning visit to Ballybrickan, and to pass the afternoon hours took with me my gun and late gift. Soon the spaniel had a rabbit afoot, at which I fired. The dog stopped in his headlong pursuit, looked at me very gravely, and came to heel. This conduct I took no notice of, and shortly the spaniel appeared to forget it, for when I entered some woodland he went to work with renewed energy, and flushed a woodcock. This bird I cut down about twenty yards in his front, and directly in his view. For a moment my treasure halted to look at me; curiosity, astonishment, and apprehension all seemed embodied in that glance, then off he went, tail down and head up, as if he had seen the veritable "bogie man." I do not think that the scared beast had any preconceived notion where to direct his steps, his sole object being to get anywhere out of so dangerous a locality. Some days afterwards the truant was found many miles off from where he bid me so abrupt a good-bye.

If after this I took my gun from the rack, my beauty was under the bed or sofa in an instant. The dog was altogether too handsome, and, generally speaking, too intelligent to part with. Moreover, he was the gift of as pretty a little "muffin" as could be found on either side of the Atlantic, so I resolved to be patient, and leave no stone unturned to accomplish my desired end. At that time I possessed a band-box headed, blear-eyed, bad-tempered, and most unsociable and unlovable old pointer. He had a wonderful nose, and his endurance—if not hurried—was marvellous. He never—well, seldom ever—made a mistake, and, if such did occur, it was not the dog's fault. I never knew a beast that seemed to understand the importance of his avocation and the necessity of performing it in an orthodox manner as this pointer did. I almost think that if I had made a succession of bad shots, Ponto would have walked off home; and that if I had attempted to prevent him carrying out his resolution, he would have reminded me that Nature had given him teeth and brains, and a knowledge of how and when to use them.

The spaniel had a most holy dread of the pointer, and was always upon the very best of good behaviour when in his presence. On such occasions rowdiness gave place to Sunday manners, and boisterous hilarity to abject fawning. All these eccentricities and peculiarities I noted among the details of my humble home, so determined to turn them to account. The spaniel I coupled to the pointer. At first there was a slight display of resistance on the part of the former, but it was badly conceived and worse executed, so it was not persisted in. At length we entered a snipe marsh. Both dogs kept together, as if entirely of one mind, exhibiting externally a most beautiful and touching example of the extraordinary friendship of Damon and Pythias. But a snipe now flushed. Ponto went down to shot, but his dear chum kicked up such a row and struggled so violently, that the old veteran took the recusant insubordinate by the neck and simply choked him into a proper sense of the heinousness of his conduct. The pointer retrieved, the spaniel had to go and see this part of the repulsive work performed, and somehow or other the gun-shy dog commenced to evince evidence of a belief that it was dawning upon his intelligence that there was some fun and a good deal of excitement to be obtained in the society of a man and gun. That spaniel proved after a brief time to be one of the very best cover dogs I ever possessed. Out of twenty, possibly more, trials that I have made to cure gun-shyness, the above is the only instance that I can quote where success rewarded my efforts. But on this occasion I had many things in my favour; the spaniel was remarkably high-couraged and passionately fond of hunting. Even then I should have failed but for the assistance of old Ponto. But who has now got one of that antediluvian stock? No one in England that I wot of, although in the South of France and Spain they may still be picked up, and in which countries they are made more hideous than Nature ever intended them to be by docking off half their tails.

Captain Peel, of the Royal Scots—my old regiment—was a great authority on sporting dogs. He wrote a book upon the subject that had for years a well-merited popularity. I have known him on many occasions try to break pointers and setters of this abominable fault, but never with success. When rifle practice was going on at St. George's Bay, Malta, or at the Neutral Ground, Gibraltar, he would trot out his pupils, and there make them fast during the hours of firing, but ultimately he gave his labour up, and pronounced the fault incorrigible.

AN UNSOLICITED INTERVIEW.

DO you know the land of the "cypress and myrtle"? If not, I do, and much as it has been sung and lauded, in my humble belief it falls very far short in beauty and attractiveness of many other parts of the earth. The prejudiced, and those whose wandering steps have never taken them beyond the shores of the Levant, may say to the above assertion, "Nonsense!" My answer to such people is, "Travel further afield, view other lands and seas, and then, if your opinions be not altered, your sneer will, at least, be deemed more worthy of weight."

"The land of the west," "the land of the setting sun," I will in this instance write the praises of, for it was the scene of the following adventure;—

In the province of Ontario is a lake, known by the melodious Chippewa name of "Couchachin." Its waters are as blue and pellucid as are those of the Greek Archipelago, while its islands—alas, few in number—are such tangles of the most lovely verdure, that no lover of nature, no admirer of verdure, can gaze upon them without intense admiration, almost adoration.

Near the northern end of Lake Couchachin was a very deep inlet, one side of which was marshy, with a tolerably close covering of meadow grass. This coarse herbage grew to the height of from three to four feet, and always sheltered a goodly number of wild duck, as well as numerous snipe. These varieties of game were to be found in this favoured spot throughout the summer and autumn, and the stock did not appear to be diminished by paying it a visit as often as twice a week. It was a splendid and valuable little demesne to possess so close to my residence, my home being only two miles distant; for when a boating party or others notified me of an intended visit, I could unfailingly provide my guests with something better for lunch than the invariable salt pork and saleratus biscuits, the almost perpetual diet of the frontier agriculturists.

At an adjoining village resided several very pretty girls. They could paddle a canoe, or pull an oar—ay, and, if need demanded it, handle a gun with the majority of our sex. I dislike masculine women, but these were nothing of the kind, only proficients in occupations which by necessity they were frequently called upon to practise.

After the morning "chores" had been done, such as milking, feeding the hogs, and cutting up a sufficiency of stove wood for the coming day's consumption, I was about to commence breakfast, when my aged and exceedingly ugly housekeeper, who always presided at that meal, exclaimed, "There's that drunken lout of an 'Injun' loafing about here again. I tell you, sir, I don't feel safe, so much alone as I am. I wish you'd order him off, sir; I'm certain sure he's a thief."

I raised my eyes to the verandah, and on it stood poor Joe, a drunkard when he could obtain spirits, nevertheless, when sober, the truest and kindest creature in the world. Moreover, he was a perfect marvel in trapping and hunting. Joe, seeing that my eyes were fixed upon him, fumbled about for a few moments in the voluminous breast pocket of his filthy flannel coat, and after some delay held up a note.

The note was to announce that, weather being suitable, the young ladies before alluded to would honour my log cabin with their presence to lunch on the morrow. There was nothing in the larder, I was assured, to entertain company with, so, to remedy that defect, I took down my gun, called my dog, and dismissed Joe to his village a shilling richer.

The season was early in October, and never in my life have I seen the foliage more brilliantly tinted, the water so transparent, and the atmosphere so still and clear.

My tramp over a hardwood ridge was sufficient to build up a stock of health for at least a future year. All animated nature seemed to be similarly affected, for the wood birds whistled and warbled as if desirous of expressing the excess of their happiness.

At length I arrived at my demesne; before entering it I loaded with No. 5, so as to make certain of what ducks I came across, as the snipe would not leave the locality until they had been several times disturbed. It was a grand rich feeding ground for these long-bills, and well the little beauties knew that there was not such another within several miles.

I commenced well—a mallard and duck fell almost immediately to my right and left barrel. Next, a sheldrake; after, a black duck, and so on and so on. But a mellow, deep note fell on my ear; again and again it was repeated, and evidently getting closer. What it was I at once understood: hunters were driving deer on the other side of the inlet. The opposite shore was little more than four hundred yards distant from where I stood, and every chance was in my favour that their game, if hard pressed, would take the water and make for my side. If such were the case I should see the hunted animal in time to change my load; if not why, *n'importe*. I love the voice of a deep-mouthed hound, and, possibly, never does it sound more melodious than when heard in the heavy-timbered forest. Unconsciously, I became all eyes and ears for what was going on across the water, and I knew the ground so well that I could picture in my mind the gallant deer, at one time strolling over this ridge—then, at a slower pace, traversing the occasional breaks of heavy cedar swamp—while, hundreds of yards behind, followed his slow but unerring pursuers. Utterly unconscious of my surroundings, my whole thoughts were centred in the doings of the *dramatis personæ* hidden in the opposite woodlands.

But could it be that a deer had gained my side without my knowing? Close at hand some large animal was most assuredly moving through the marsh, and most obviously coming towards me. From the noise it made it could not be many paces distant, but see the unknown I could not, for the reeds and rushes were at that particular place both denser and taller than elsewhere. Never thinking, never doubting but that it was a deer—the fact of the proximity of the tall cover being selected for a landing place would have allayed my doubts, if I had previously had any—I strained myself to my greatest height, so as to obtain the earliest possible chance of firing. I was not long detained in this uncomfortable position; not three yards off, and evidently passing me, was a bear. At the moment I saw the beast he appeared to wind me, for he stopped and turned his small inquiring eyes in my direction. A moment was not to be lost. I had then the advantage of height, so, with little depression in my barrels, I aimed, or rather fired a snap shot at the bridge of my new acquaintance's nose, and poor bruin collapsed as momentarily as an unfortunate old garron would do under the blow of a pole-axe.

The destructive power of a charge of No. 5 at such short range is truly terrible.

My prize had a splendid pelt, otherwise the beast was not remarkable.

THE THAMES AS A TROUT RIVER.

A DESIRE for quiet and change of air some months ago induced me to take up my residence in one of those picturesque villages that are to be found upon the margin of Britain's most famous river, the Thames. My temporary home was near Chertsey, and within a hundred yards of the stream itself. In October I went there, and employed the interval between that month and the following April—by far the most interesting half of the year—in studying the instincts, habits, and modes of life of the various species of fish found in the adjoining waters.

Before writing of the grand *Salmo fario* that are occasionally captured in the Thames, I will refer to traditions and records that I have gathered in this neighbourhood from fishermen and others whose ancestors lived on its banks 300 years ago. That is a long period to go back, I am well aware, but research and inquiry have satisfied me that I am stating what is true, and that no deception has been practised upon me in regard to the progenitors of my instructors, and the information imparted to me by their descendants. A very old man, still hearty and robust, informed me a few days since, on Chertsey Bridge, that his grandfather often told him of the quantities of salmon that frequented the Thames in his day. "Not so long ago, neither," said the veteran, "only a hundred years or thereabouts; but in the French war, in 'Boney's' time, the river up to London Bridge was so blocked by men-of-war, transports, and store ships, pumping night and day their filthy bilge water into the stream, that the salmon commenced to fight shy of facing the stinking water, so gradually got more and more scarce. After that time came new plans for drainage, which took all the sewage into the river; soon after steamboats followed with their slashing paddles or infernal screws, stirring up all the mud and slush by the ground swell that they created, and, last of all, iron ships came into fashion, which could only be kept afloat by pumping out of their insides the most 'cussed' poison—for it was all a wash from rusted rotten iron—that could a'most be found, so the salmon quitted the river, and since those days one has not been seen above Gravesend. For you see, sir, he's a cleanly fish, is a salmon, and no way like a barbel or a 'h'eel,' or any of that dirty-feeding kind."

My informant was unquestionably right, for, as I wended my way from Walton to Shepperton, from Shepperton to Chertsey, and from thence on to Penton Hook, I could not help exclaiming to myself, "Did ever mortal man see a river so admirably constituted as a breeding place for the gamest and finest of known fish in the world, as this one certainly is?" But in spite of what the most enthusiastic may anticipate, the most ardent desire, and the greatest scientists prophesy, I very much fear that the Thames will never again become a salmon river.

However, those very qualities which make it so eminently suitable as the temporary residence of *Salmo salar*, fit it pre-eminently to become the permanent home of its near, and almost equally esteemed relation, *Salmo fario*, for an annual visit to the sea is not necessary to the welfare of the last-mentioned species.

But do the upper waters of this grand river produce trout in such quantities as would naturally be anticipated from its adaptability to such a purpose?

Most certainly not; very, very far from it. The reader may, perhaps, require some explanation of the grounds on which I so emphatically make this assertion.

Since trout-fishing commenced this season, I cannot learn of more than a dozen of the species being captured by anglers, between Penton Hook and Walton, the distance dividing these places, following the river, being, at a rough estimate, some half-a-dozen miles, the whole space being occupied by noble reaches, grand rapids, splendid pools, and occasional weirs, none of which are high enough to interrupt a trout's progress when in search of new haunts or fresh spawning grounds. Moreover, the bed of the stream is composed of exactly such qualities of gravel and sand as are deemed the best suited and most attractive, on which to deposit ova, with every prospect of the most favourable hatching out.

And yet, from this splendid expanse of water—although a daily visitor to it, and well acquainted with many of the fishermen—I am only able to hear of a dozen trout being taken this season. I insist, therefore, that there must be a reason for the scarcity of these noble fish in water so admirably suited to all their requirements.

After due consideration and study, I have come to a firm belief that, from the Thames being navigable throughout its course right up to Lechlade, its bosom is so constantly ploughed by tow-boats and steam-launches, that the unfortunate speckled beauties are unable to find a sanctuary for the procreation of their own race. This conclusion may be opposed by interested persons—such, for instance, as love to lounge on the deck of a swift steam-launch; but I feel certain that no person of common sense who watches the disturbance of the water made by these mechanically-propelled boats in their progress through it, or the heavy ground-swell that they throw up against either bank in their passage up or down stream, can question for a moment the injury done to such animal life as has its home in the liquid element.

Of all fish that swim in the Thames, trout, I believe, suffer most from the above-mentioned cause, as their haunts are where they can enjoy the invigorating influence of the swift-running water, only to be obtained in the main channel (therefore, traffic way) of the river; while coarser fish frequent, indifferently, back-waters, inlets, and even localities where no flow is perceptible. Yet even this selection does not render them safe in their breeding operations, for into every creek and back-water of sufficient depth these mosquito steamships are sure to enter. Coarse fish, moreover, deposit their spawn around the aquatic vegetation that surrounds their haunts, most frequently only a very slight distance beneath low-water level. Such being the case, it is obvious that the wash of passing steam craft must be very injurious to it. It is, however, to be doubted whether the commoner fish suffer from destruction of their ova as do trout, for the reason that, as a rule, as I have attempted to show, they do not deposit their spawn so much in the thoroughfare or main highway of traffic.

Swans, also, are a most serious obstacle to the increase of trout in the Thames. Many authorities have stated this, but for a long time I was sceptical, and believed that their depredations were much exaggerated; not so now, however, for late last autumn and early in the past winter these birds used to frequent in numbers the most probable breeding-places of the trout, more particularly those in proximity to Penton Hook, Chertsey, and Weybridge Weirs, and, moreover, seemed to be pursuing a most profitable avocation. But the injury these birds can do, although unquestionably great, cannot for a moment, in my belief, be compared with the wholesale destruction effected by steam-propelled craft.

After research, I have come to the conclusion that no known stream produces such large and handsome trout as the Thames, and, this being the case, it behoves us to cherish the species, and do all in our power to perpetuate the breed's existence; although I greatly fear this is impossible in its own habitat; for the public will never succeed in abolishing steam traffic on this goodly river, nor even in getting rid of the swans, so that it is only a matter of time for this most game, large, and handsome fish to become extinct in the haunt provided it by nature.

Many of the dozen trout caught here this season I inspected personally, and those I viewed were very deep in shape and beautifully coloured, ranging from three and a half to six and a half pounds. Although I did not see the largest taken, I was informed by a reliable person that it scaled over 8lbs., was very much out of condition, and dull and lustreless in the colour of the scales, having much the appearance of a fish that had just spawned. It was captured immediately under Weybridge Weir, a bleak being the bait employed. From the above it will be seen that no small fish were taken, such, for instance, as run two or three to the pound. Now, what is the cause of this, viz., that while there are a few comparatively large fish in the river, there are literally no small ones? But it may be said, These large fish must have once been small. True, but they were not small fish in the Thames, but originally turned into it by some piscicultural society after attaining sufficient size and strength to guard against the numerous dangers that are incidental to fish life, particularly to such as pass their existence in the grand pools, reaches, and rapids of our Queen of rivers.

Jack and perch have also become very scarce, but

I am informed that both were abundant in this locality a quarter of a century ago. To the steam launches I again attribute the diminution in their numbers. If this wholesale destruction continues, the harmless pleasure of fishing, now enjoyed by thousands of the residents of our metropolis, will be at an end. It is to be hoped that they will not turn their attention to less innocent and therefore more dangerous pursuits.

VARIETIES OF LEOPARDS AND WEIGHT OF LIONS.

It is pleasant—more so, I may say delightful—to come across a name with which you have at one time been familiar. It is like the voice of a friend calling to you from the Spirit Land, where, alas! so many of my old hunting friends have a long time since been paraded.

An ex-elephant hunter—who writes to me on the subject of the heading—and his brother were long prominent lights among that small band of adventurers, whose corps was headed by the gallant Sir Cornwallis Harris, soon after followed by that bravest and most reckless of dare-devils, Gordon Cumming. Bechuana Land and the Matabele country were in their time unknown lands, inhabited by fierce, wily, and treacherous savages, whose assegais and knob-kerries were against every stranger, black or white, who trespassed within the limits of their demesne. Firearms were unknown in those days by the aborigines, so the wild game wandered about in a state of untrammelled freedom, and in such uncountable numbers that to enumerate them would be almost as difficult as a friend of mine states in an original couplet:—

Count me every leaflet green in some deep forest to be seen;
Count me every grain of sand that wild waves wash upon the
strand.

The game is gone now, or exists in very much reduced numbers, lamentable to say; but there is one redeeming ray of light left—viz., that there are some of those bold explorers left to tell what they have seen, and most markedly is this applicable in reference to Mr. P. M'Gillewie, who has doubtlessly in the good (?) old times been defrauded and robbed by Kama's august father, or been entertained by the bloodthirsty, stalwart savage, Mosulecatse. If my correspondent had nothing further to write about than how he was treated by these all-powerful potentates, it would be information well worth reading, but when his pen touches upon the habits, instincts, and varieties of the wild animals he encountered in his day, he opens up a mine rich in natural history wealth.

It is true that Mr. P. M'Gillewie has not honoured me with a long letter, but, brief as his contribution is, it proves amply that he is treating upon subjects with which he is thoroughly conversant, therefore I hope, as I am certain a vast army of naturalists will also do, that this is not the last that they will hear from him, but rather that it is the commencement of a series of epistles in which his great experiences among the wild beasts of South Africa are narrated.

In the second paragraph of his letter he alludes to my having seen a panther, not a leopard. Why this distinction? for I have ever upheld, and do uphold, the conviction that leopard and panther are synonymous terms, and mean identically the same species. For a long period I have tried to instil this belief, but it is only within the last year or two that my labour has produced any results. I see that great Nimrod, Sir Samuel Baker, has come to my way of thinking, for in his new book there is a picture of one of these creatures crouching, with a line of explanation underneath, "The leopard or panther always wary."

Although acknowledging myself not entirely free from reproach in doing so, I have, I know, not unfrequently in years gone by applied both these names indifferently to the same beast, but I ever intended to express the same species, being to a certain extent guided by the size of the animal I was writing of. Thus, if it was unusually large, I designated it a panther; if of medium size, or small, a leopard. I have known others to do the same, and probably, by force of example, I was led to follow their nomenclature.

I have long waited to see if anyone would come forth and state that he had seen either a black leopard, or the skin of one, in Africa. Such a skin was brought under my notice two or three days' journey to the north-east of Zoutspansberg, Transvaal. The hide was so much valued by its owner that he refused to part with it. His companions, as well as himself, did not believe it a different species, but only produced by a freak of nature.

For many years the black fox, valued so much for its fur in Russia, was considered a totally distinct species from the red fox. This idea has now totally exploded, as black and red cubs have been several times found in the northern regions of North America in the same burrow, and, from their size and development, unquestionably belonging to the same litter. Audubon and Bacheman, the eminent Transatlantic naturalists, mention such a discovery taking place in Scoharie County, State of New York. I also heard, from reliable authority, that a mixed litter was discovered near Muskoko Lake, Canada West. There are also numerous other instances of a similar kind that could, without any very great trouble, be confirmed. As with the foxes, so it is with the leopards, and so I shall continue to believe till it is undeniably proved that I am in error.

As to the weight of lions, but for Mr. P. M'Gillewie's statements on the subject, I doubt that I should have touched upon the matter, as there is unquestionably a tendency among Indian sportsmen to place the tiger in a superior position to the "king of beasts," not only in courage, ferocity, power, but also in size, and controversy, even on paper, is not to my taste.

The lion killed at Kopje Alleen I have heard a hunter speak of as a very fine animal; the existence of larger I have been informed of by traders, but the largest that I have any confirmatory evidence to corroborate the asserted weight, was shot about the date that the engagement between the British and Boers was fought, that is known by the name of "the Battle of Boom Platje." Sixteen years ago I trecked over Van Renan's pass in the Drakenberg. When half of our journey was accomplished we found the cutting in a fearful state from the effect of a very severe thunderstorm. Thus the oxen had a herculean task to reach the crest of the mountain. Next day but one I made two short trecks and found myself under the Organ "Copje," a wonderful and grandly-picturesque detached giant, covered to the south and west with wood, but destitute of timber to the east, as its face in that direction was a perpendicular precipice that appeared utterly unclimbable to animal life. Within easy ride flowed the Vilgee river, on whose banks stood a comfortable homestead. The proprietor, whose name was Smidt, was most hospitable, so I remained with him that night. He had another guest, a Scottish schoolmaster, who had resided many years among the Dutch. This pedagogue was well informed and very communicative, so in the course of the evening he informed me of a mature male lion that had been killed by a Hottentot near my *outspan*, that weighed six hundred and sixty-two pounds (English), after being transported to Harry Smith—a village in those days—about twenty miles distant. It was scaled both by some officials of our commissariat department, and by a butcher and baker of the place, both of whom made the weight the same. Our host testified to the correctness of the narrator's statement. My friends, Captain Lucas and Captain Hodson, both officers of the Hottentot Mounted Rifles, confirmed the above from the statement of unprejudiced witnesses, who had been present when the grand beast was weighed. In the truth of the great weight of this grand old monarch of beasts I thoroughly believe.

PARTRIDGE OR QUAIL.

EXCEPT to the naturalist, it can scarcely be a matter of very great moment whether a bird is designated a partridge or a quail, but at the present date there are so many sportsmen who pride themselves on being conversant with natural history, that with some grounds of reason the terms may, to a certain extent, be deemed synonymous. For this reason I take up my pen to answer Mr. W. ——, who asks the question whether the *Ortix Virginianus* is a quail or a partridge?

I believe that it may be accepted as a truth that Audubon and Wilson are the two best authorities on the ornithology of the United States, and they both appear never to have had a doubt upon the above subject—viz., that the bird so frequently called in the Eastern and Western States quail is unquestionably a partridge. This is, in my opinion, sufficient to decide the vexed question. However, I will add my own experience, gained from actual practical observation in the haunts of both birds, viz., that there is no relationship between the *Ortix Virginianus* and *Coturnix communis*. In fact, I will go further by saying that it is my firm belief that not a single species or variety of the last-named family is to be found upon the vast extent of the American continents. I am not prepared to pronounce upon the identity of the bird found in Jamaica, but from the position of that island and its proximity to Cuba, it is quite possible, nay probable, that the Virginian partridge is found there, more particularly as it has long been known to be an inhabitant of the Queen of the Antilles.

The beautiful plumed bird, known on the west coast of America as Californian quail, is also not a quail according to the authorities that I can gain information from, but a true *hemipode*, or very closely allied to it, such as are the *courseurs* of Northern Africa and the *Turnix lepurana* of interior tropical Africa. The names of both the last-mentioned, more or less, express their running proclivities, but I doubt very much if they can excel in this agility the erroneously so-called Californian quail. In their own home these birds are unquestionably very hardy, but I have never heard of successful attempts being made to acclimatize them elsewhere. The Danish Consul at Hong Kong and myself made the experiment. A mutual friend, Captain Linnell, of the clipper ship *Flying Mist*, brought us over from California twenty couple of these birds. They arrived in good health and condition, and were at once allotted and consigned to homes. One half to the peninsula beyond the garrison of Stanley, Hong Kong, the remainder to Shangmoon Valley, on the Chinese mainland, and opening out into Meers Bay. A beautifully sequestered place, with all the requisites—as far as a human being could judge—necessary to their comforts and existence. Ultimately, however, they disappeared, so all our efforts were in vain.

Mr. W. —— further remarks, "they—Americans—call grouse, partridge." This is quite true as regards the inhabitants of the New England States, the Maritime Provinces and Newfoundland, but further south the same bird (*Tetrao umbellus*) is dubbed a pheasant. The wapiti deer (*Cervus Canadensis*) on the foot hills and in the Rockies is invariably named an elk, while the moose (*Alces malchis*) is only entitled to that appellation. These misnomers could be enumerated *ad nauseam;* but why castigate our neighbours on such a point when the same ignorance is to be found at home, being more particularly displayed with reference to fish?

A friend in a communication has the following:—"If these birds (*Ortix Virginianus*) are not quail, or the California birds, what are quail? Only the 'button' sort found in the Mediterranean and South Africa, I conclude." The italicized synonym inscribed above is mine.

The "button quail," a well-known species of the *Coturnix* family, does not, to my knowledge, exist in either of the places named, but in India, Malay Archipelago, tropical China, and tropical East Africa. It is very little larger than a wren, and is almost invariably found in bevies, which, when disturbed, all flush at the same instant, but not until the intruder is close upon them. This sudden and simultaneous action of taking flight has often before now sent the heart of a sportsman up into his mouth. This species generally comes with the rains, and disappears soon after dry weather sets in. Does not, therefore, my correspondent mean the common quail, so abundant all over "the East"?

The painted quail is also not uncommon in the habitat of the "button quail." It is a trifle larger, however, and very beautifully and brilliantly marked. I have always found it in pairs. From this I conclude that it was simply a temporary visitor to such places, and had come there to breed.

The Harlequin quail is another species found in Africa, but is far from abundant where I have been. I have shot it upon the low-lying meadows that sometimes occur along the Crocodile river. It is said to be numerous near Lake N'gami and on the upper tributaries of the Zambesi.

The common quail, and not the button quail, everyone or nearly everyone knows, unless he has been nurtured and spent his life in America. I have found them in all parts of the old world that I have visited, and are unquestionably as good specimens of the true migrant as can be found.

WILDFOWL SHOOTING IN THE WESTERN STATES.

MY correspondents are numerous, and truly sufficiently diversified, but, for all that, I have heard from them nothing upon the above subject, one that is most interesting to all sportsmen that can afford to visit foreign lands.

I have travelled a good deal in my time, visiting the Antipodes East, far East and West, so am not altogether ignorant of the sport to be obtained in other lands, but I have failed to find a country equal to America for the *cream* of *sport*—water-fowl shooting.

But it is generally pretty trying work, so a man requires to be young and "fit" to undertake it, and if he be possessed with the constitution of a water-spaniel, so much the better for himself. The reason of this is that the "fowl" are always most numerous in the most exposed places, and at the most trying seasons of the year, viz., when autumn breaks into winter, and when winter is about to give place to spring, and the more boisterously, with low temperature, these changes are accomplished, the better are the chances of sport.

But before taking the field, or rather the "*sloughs*," let me give a visitor to the Western States a few hints on guns and dress, which, I flatter myself, will do him good service, if attended to. We have our insular prejudices, we have our continental dislikes, both are founded upon experience, and are brought about by peculiarities in the countries we have visited. In proof of this, when I have shot across the Atlantic I have used a 12-bore, when you visit the western country, provide yourself with a 10-bore. Now, although what I say after this may appear contradictory to the above selection of weapons, I will at once state that, in my belief, there is no gun, in proportion to its weight and calibre, can give such good results as a 10-bore, and no style of field sports will so well exhibit this superiority as water-fowl shooting.

I am aware that in those parts of the Eastern States where heavy-plumaged birds are getting scarce, there is a tendency among the inhabitants to adopt 12-bore guns. That is all well enough where the game solely consists of "bob-whites," ruffed grouse, woodcock, snipe, and hares, for they are light to carry and very handy in cover; but go out West, where water-fowl are still plentiful, and you will find the folks there sticking to their 10 bores as their fathers did before them. Now, as I am going to take the reader out West with me—in thought, at least—I will leave the Yankees to shoot with what they "darned please," while I tell you what you are to fetch from your side of the water when you make a trip westward of the Wabash river, or, better still, beyond the "Big Muddy," otherwise known as the Missouri.

A quarter of a century back there was an Englishman of the name of Abbey residing in Chicago, who could turn out the best muzzle-loader for prairie work that I ever saw. Occasionally even now you will see his productions in the hands of patriarchs, who were not young when the "know nothing" political party was organized. In our own country I have met gentlemen in the field with Manton's and Egg's, keeping everybody waiting while they fooled away good time loading. For neither of these kinds of old "cranks" am I writing—if such want to shoot, let them do it alone, or in the company of servants—but for the man of the period, who is up to date, and is able to appreciate improvements and avail himself of them. Patrick Mullin of New York City, Abbey of Chicago, Manton, Egg, and others did good work in their day, and their memory will long be respected and remembered; but we must advance; nothing shows the rottenness of a state, and, I will add, of a sportsman, so much as want of progress, or, in other words, keeping up to date.

In England I venture to say that there is no difficulty in getting any type of arms that you require, and at what appears to me very moderate prices. I gave my order on one occasion to a Birmingham firm, and, not to put all my eggs in one basket, ordered first one gun. This I had duplicated, and, except for the stocks being slightly different in the run of the grain of the wood, no difference in finish, bend, or execution was perceptible, and their very best performances are with exactly the same charges. I tried both the weapons in Scotland at the end of last season, and, therefore, when the birds were strong and well feathered, if any escaped me under a range of sixty-five yards, I am convinced the fault was mine, not that of the guns. Last spring I also gave them a lot of work on ducks and geese in Northern Nebraska, U.S., and I would be afraid to say what long shots I made, in case the reader put me down as a "blower." The "fowl," too, were all old birds, in perfect plumage and strength. Englishmen may doubt this, but American spring ducks and geese are, as a rule, harder to kill than "fall" birds, for the reason that they have all reached maturity when they return northward in the first-mentioned season, have not exhausted themselves by long migrations—for they only follow up on the edge of the thaw—and being about to proceed to their far-off northern breeding grounds, for the purpose of reproducing their own species, are of necessity in the most robust health.

To arrive at a description of the guns in question I think is time, but their plan of ejecting shells and lock mechanism I will omit, for the reason that there are in the market so many inventions—many good of their kind—that to do so would only lead to controversy, and possibly acrimonious bickering.

Weight of gun, 7½lbs.; length of barrels, 26in., more or less choked according to the precision with which the sportsman aims; charge, 4 grain Curtis and Harvey's gunpowder; with an ounce of No. 9 shot for snipe, or 1 1-8 ozs. of No. 5 shot for duck, and the last quantity of No. 3 shot for geese, chilled shot preferable for ducks and geese.

I may here say that at Glasgow I had some cartridges loaded with Messrs. Hall and Son's gunpowder, manufactured, I am informed, in the Kyles of Bute, than which nothing could be better.

The two nationalities, English and American—who, after all, are the same race—have some marked peculiarities when following their fascinating and popular pursuit. The latter invariably shoots with a more crooked stock than does the former; to that I answer, use what you are most successful with. On the other hand, I have observed that Englishmen put larger charges of shot in their guns than do American. To this I might give the answer that I have in the other case, but it is not so applicable, for the bend of a stock will not alter the range of a gun, while a superfluous quantity of shot will. My experience may be new to others. If so, so much the better, but I have seen both on the moors when grouse was the game, and in turnips, when partridges were the birds sought for, gentlemen shooting an ounce and a quarter, even an ounce and three-eighths of shot from a 12-bore. This overcharge, slight as it may appear, increases friction materially, and consequently reduces range, and, nothing, of course, is so fruitful of recoil. A gun that recoils sufficiently to unpleasantly demonstrate the fact, will—in spite of all the resolutions made not to notice it—put the sportsman off his shooting.

My two guns from Birmingham I tried with every conceivable charge that was likely to be useful, and got the best results with the quantities I have above mentioned. Of course many will say that guns bored on different patterns require more or less ammunition. My answer to this is, Yes, probably; but out of the vast number of guns that I have had, none ever gave me the same perfection as my present battery, and their charges are the quantities above stated.

I do not aspire to be an authority on the above subject, and I have scrupulously refrained from mentioning the name of the person who built my guns, for I am certain other equally good gunmakers are to be found; further, I have no ambition to be taken for an advertising agent, but have simply stated what a gun can do, and with what loads the best performances are accomplished.

I have been charged by a West-end London maker seventy guineas for a gun, cases and loading machines complete, and it was truly a beautiful specimen of what an artist could turn out, and doubtless it would have lasted me my lifetime. Although a good killer, it did not at all equal my present favourites. They were made and finished in Birmingham; their price, with cases and all loading adjuncts, was forty pounds. It may, so early in their possession, be premature for me to say that I have not a doubt but that they will descend to my heirs as good performers in the field as they are at the present moment.

For successful duck-shooting in the Western States you must possess a good retriever. A tall, upstanding animal in the heavy mud and slush that you will frequently encounter, is more valuable than a smaller beast. Colonel Hawker, I am aware, recommended the latter, but it must be remembered that he generally alluded to boat work, not to killing your game off the margins of sloughs, ponds, rivers, or even in open cornfields.

I have had two wonderfully good dogs, both remarkable for their sagacity, strength, endurance, and power of resisting the most inclement weather. They had a general resemblance, being alike in coats. The first's, however, was wavy, not long, but inclined to be harsh; the latter a trifle darker fawn brown. The first animal I procured through a member of the Maryland Club, that well-known resort of thorough good fellows and excellent sportsmen. He was of the breed so well known on the upper waters of the Chesapeake, Carrols Island, Sussie Island, and Havre de Grâce. From what race or mixture of races they originally sprang I doubt if any person can inform you. Terrier blood they undoubtedly possess, and possibly a strain of Newfoundland, so we will put them down as curs, but nevertheless most valuable curs at that. Many a hard day's work my dogs and I went through together, and many another I looked forward to, but in an unlucky moment I decided to take the senior with me to the Bijou Hills, in Iowa, where he was struck by a timber rattle-snake, to the poison of which he succumbed.

My second favourite, and the most wonderful retriever I ever saw, is now four years old. He has all the qualities of the first-mentioned, with sagacity —I may say intellect—that is surprising. All work he seems equally to comprehend, herding cattle or sheep, watch dog, fetching my slippers from my bedroom, or my letters and papers from the post-office, all are within his province. With setters and pointers in the field he is equally at home, and I defy a human being to mark a covey or wounded bird with the precision that he does.

I had a large retriever bitch given me in Norfolk, yellow to tawny in colour, close-coated, and very curly. This was the dam. The sire was an otter hound, bought on Tyneside, a thorough good representative of the old type, hard haired, and showing a tendency to be knock-kneed; coat very hard and straight. I had intended breeding the bitch to a Newfoundland of good parts, but an accident occurred, similar to that which procured us the valuable strain in our thoroughbreds, viz., the Godolphin blood.

Boatswain, for so I called him, would have been drowned, as all his brothers and sisters were, had not a friend's little boy taken an inordinate fancy to him. He took to retrieving naturally before he was three months old, and would swim across the Rock River in a flood, a month afterwards, yet for all this he was the ugliest, biggest-jointed, and slackest put together puppy that I ever saw. At maturity his coat was the counterpart of his sire's, in other respects he followed his dam. I ever had a horror of mongrels about me, and possess the antipathy now, but Boatswain is a privileged being, and is as popular with my guests as with his master. I had serious thoughts once of bringing him to England, just to show how smart an American-bred dog could be, but I think my neighbours would have gone demented if deprived of his society.

As I have above said, I am far from partial to curs, yet for a person who requires a retriever for transatlantic water-fowl shooting, I think if he could get the progenitors, he might do worse than make the experiment that turned out for me such a "ten stroke." I am at present debarred from repeating it, for I have lost both parents. However, I have reason to hope that through the instrumentality of friends the breed can be replaced.

But after all, retrievers—if you except the Irish water, and some other spaniels—which by successive crossing are but mongrels, sprang from mingling different breeds, until the desired result is obtained, when the breeder, through a succession of years, confining himself to the same strains of blood, ultimately established a race which, in the course of time, becomes accepted as a pure race.

The Gordon setter, the old Romney Marsh retriever the Norfolk retriever, and many others that can be mentioned, are all examples of this.

I have said my say upon guns and dogs; an equally important matter will now occupy my attention, without attending to which your probable success in wildfowl shooting upon the Western prairies will be much reduced, viz., dress. Always have your clothes as much approximating to the colour of the landscape over which you shoot as it is possible to have them. Thus, in late autumn, a greenish russet shade is often perfection, while in early spring, in such sections of country as prairie grasses have been burned off, then a butternut or rusty brown suit should be worn. In Kentucky and Southern Ohio this cloth is made, the dye being the juice of the butternut, an exaggerated walnut. Of course, if snow is on the ground or falling, white covering must be resorted to; but an old white shirt drawn over your other garments answers all purposes. Caps, of course, are to correspond with the colour worn. What is denominated in England a Norfolk jacket is the most comfortable shape in which to have your outer covering made, with pockets to suit the wearer's fancy, but none of these must be thick enough to interfere with the pitching up of the gun to the shoulder. Knickerbockers very loose about the knee, leggings, and substantial, laced ankle boots complete your rig out. The material used for the construction of the suit should be good substantial Scotch or Irish tweed, with woollen stockings and underclothing. Never be induced to wear what in America are called "gum boots;" for a time—that is, till their surface is scratched—they will keep out water, but, on the other hand, they prevent the perspiration from escaping, and so submit your limbs to a protracted Turkish bath, which is not only weakening, but unquestionably very unhealthy. If you have to drive a considerable distance to regain home after your day's pleasure is over, put on dry clothes at your trap. If this cannot be accomplished, consider it a sacred duty that you owe yourself, to permit nothing to interfere with an immediate and thorough change being effected the moment you regain shelter. By attending strictly to these simple precepts, although many used to affirm that I courted rheumatism, I have escaped its influences so far, although well on in middle age, and have never missed, when practicable, whatever the state of the weather might be, a day's "ducking" or snipe-shooting upon the Western prairies.

Having progressed so far, I will imagine that the neophyte is provided with gun, retriever, and costume suitable for his work, and that he is upon the edge of a Western river—there called a creek—sluggish in its flow, with water tolerably stained with decayed vegetation. In the stream, by the margin, a wide growth of lily-pads and rushes exists, the whole shut in by clumps of sumach, osier, water-maple, and dwarf poplar. Behind this brush fringe, and between it and the upright bank, will be found a path, not a very good one, in truth, still of sufficient merit to materially assist the sportsman's progress. It has been formed by the otters, minks, musk-rats, and raccoons that haunt all such places. The name of this watercourse is the Little Sioux (for I am not sketching an imaginary picture), which, after a very tortuous course, joins the Red River.

The season of the year is early autumn, too soon by several weeks for the arrival of the immense migratory herds of duck that will find their way here later on. Still, for all that, "a good sprinkling of 'fowl' will be found," as a thoroughly Western man would express himself, if asked what were the prospects of sport. What I did here two years ago, when accompanied by an out-and-out sportsman and splendid shot, I will extract from my diary, and in as brief terms as possible. After a loss of some valuable time, and much vexation of spirit, Mark induced a poverty-stricken squatter to take him across the Little Sioux in his scow, for which two minutes' job he did not deem himself sufficiently paid by receipt of a dollar. My friend remarked that, if he had known that he was so hungry after "greenbacks" he would have taken the darned boat without permission, and "let him whistle or fight for the debt." Thus we did not commence shooting until half-past ten. The width of the river here is just sufficient to be well covered by two guns. For the first half mile we did nothing, old Charon and his numerous progeny doubtless making the neighbourhood too noisy for duck to harbour near it. However, at a sharp bend, things took a more favourable turn. My chum signalled me to look out—never speak on such occasions—which I did, but not before Boatswain had observed the coming birds. They were heading down stream, and therefore approaching us, at an elevation of about thirty feet above the surface of the water. It fortunately happened that both of us were tolerably hidden by the marginal bushes, so we let the birds pass our position before firing, our first barrels speaking simultaneously. Three duck fell to this fusillade, but I quickly put in my second shot at the nearest, which was trying to gain as elevated a position as attainable. Although I dusted its jacket most thoroughly, it continued towering until almost out of sight. Then down it came, wings, neck, and legs, anyway, dead, of course, and, as any but the most utter novice will imagine, hit in the head. Out of that family we took five, all being of that beautiful species, the wood-duck or Carolina duck (*Anas sponsor*). Their breed is not so abundant here as further to the east, so proportionately more valued. They are true tree-perchers, this can at once be ascertained by a look at their toe-nails, which, if not quite as long as cats', are assuredly quite as sharp.

When squirrel-shooting with a pea-rifle, I killed one in the top of a pecan—the most delicious nut I know of anywhere—tree, and its skeleton may be hanging upon it still, for aught I know, as all efforts of mine to bring it to bag were futile.

The *Anas sponsor* is not unknown in England, but exists only in a state of captivity, when its lovely, brilliant plumage attracts universal admiration. Fly-fishermen also know it well, for some of its feathers have long been recognized as very alluring for the capture of both salmon and trout.

But Boatswain and Bob—the last a black setter of my own imported stock—have retrieved our game, and advance is the word. Single birds and pairs keep coming past, and we shoot as opportunity offers. Jealousy is unknown between us, so there is no hurrying, thus very few birds escape. Among the slain are butter ducks, dippers, and common teal, all attractive, all swift of wing, and so affording good sport. What about their gastronomic value? You that have resided at the Tremont Hotel, Chicago, can answer this ; you that have not, go to the city of grain elevators and pork-packers, and try them. If you are veritable *bon vivants* you will place them on a level with the diamond-backed terrapin, or canvas-back ducks of "old Virginie" and Maryland.

Prairie wildfowl are always excellent for the table, because they are fed upon grain, so are never fishy.

But what is that away in the far distance ? The new arrival from across the ocean would vow that they were golden plovers. Their flight and evolutions are exactly like that of those birds. On, on they come; not in a direct course, till at length, by an erratic dash, you may, if militarily inclined, say, "a flank movement," they are nearly overhead, when a salvo of four barrels greets them. Stop not to collect the dead; in with fresh cartridges into your breeches, for as soon as the astonished birds have recovered from their alarm they will again mass their scattered ranks, and, by many a sweep over their dead and maimed comrades, endeavour to learn what attraction it is that binds them to the fatal spot. It is too bad to avail ourselves of this affection that prevents a comrade deserting a chum, but we do, and again there is a shower of duck falling upon the river's surface. The last discharge has taught a lesson, and away go the survivors in precipitous flight; but, alas! only to be dealt with likewise by the next sportsman that they come across. These confiding birds are the blue-winged teal, unknown on the eastern side of the Atlantic. They are also a table bird of great excellence, and quite equal to their congeners previously described. An incident, but a common one, occurred this day on the Little Sioux. Boatswain, while searching for a winged mallard, flushed a bittern; it was a long shot—I may say a very long shot—but these birds are soft in plumage, and, therefore, easily disabled from further flights, so, after my dog had found the crippled duck, he returned for the victim of my last discharge. However, it evinced no disposition to be obliging, so showed fight. My retriever's past experience of such encounters made him cautious now, so he made a feint to throw the enemy off its guard, when he successfully got his paws upon its neck and body.

Many a young dog has been ruined by these birds, not a few blinded, and one I know of, killed. Even the sportsman should be guarded in approaching them when wounded, for they will dart at his eyes with amazing swiftness and precision, and their beak is a most formidable weapon, long, sharp, and hard as bone.

It is now well on in the day, game has become even more abundant—at a log hut we had procured a brace of lads to carry our spoils, no light loads, I can assure the reader—when Mark attracts my attention and beckons me to look off to the southward. I do so. Over an enclosure, which appears to have contained corn, I observe numerous wildfowl sailing. They are mallards, not a doubt of it, and evidently in strength. Near here is a ford, well defined by waggon wheels at their entrance and exit from the water.

Mark is not particular about getting wet when sport is on the tapis, and so he and his bearer soon regain my side. "I know that spot well," he says, "there is a "slough" there, and the most of the corn got drowned out last spring, two or three weeks after planting-time. There's a fence run's up to it on the far side, and under its shelter we can reach the water. The wind, too, will just suit. Jerusalem, we're in luck. See what a crowd of birds are coming up."

There was, indeed, a crowd of "fowl," and these seemed to be every moment joined by fresh arrivals.

We returned to the edge of the water, and kept the river bed for some distance, then emerged from it near a miserable farmhouse in the centre of a locust grove. This, I learned, was where my waggon was to meet us, and I inwardly prayed that there would be no mistake in its doing so, for to pass a night in such a poverty-stricken shanty I did not hanker after, especially when I knew that folks that live in such "ramshackle" dwellings invariably go to bed as soon as the sun goes down, giving you good twelve hours, at the very least, to kick about on a miserable and, probably, very dirty floor. In "the Far West" there are not a few of such homesteads. From the so-called barn, we gained the corn cribs, and from there the fence, and under the shelter of its weed-covered rails ultimately reached the field before spoken of.

It was just such a piece of spoilt cultivation as must give its owner a spasm every time he views it, for before him lay a cruel, cruel evidence of wasted labour, and the unkind treatment of a wet season. Not three cornhills in a dozen had produced grain, and that was stunted and blighted, so hogs had been turned into it, to do the "root, hog, or die" business. These beasts, swine like, had tramped the whole place, except the centre, where the slough was, into a cesspool, in the slime and filth of which still was to be found some grain, and the wildfowl were not slow to discover this godsend; moreover, burrs and other rapidly-growing plants had sprung up everywhere in most luxuriant growth, affording a haven of shelter from the glaring noonday sun, and a hiding-place from the numerous eagle-eyed hawks that are ever the close attendants upon the flocks of the different varieties and species of the duck family.

Mark and myself had little difficulty in gaining the unprofitable cornfield, and, further still, the vicinity of the water, but we both suffered more than inconvenience—nay, positive torture—in our exertion to do so, for the burrs—the most detestable production of the vegetable creation—almost bound our legs together, scratching and rasping our skins whenever we made a movement of our limbs. They are of two sorts, the cuckle burr and the louse burr. The first, from its size, is the most to be dreaded, but the other means to be equally objectionable, if it had only the power. They are a curse to American shooting till cut down by the frosts, and even after severe weather they do not become thoroughly exterminated. If man suffers from these abominable seed pods adhering to him, your poor four-footed companions suffer a great deal more, particularly if clothed in a long and silky coat. Often in the fall of the year I have had to cease shooting, till each dog was picked carefully over, and this process had to be repeated several times a day. If this was neglected, your kennel would most assuredly be turned into a hospital.

But to the mallards and their dusky wives. It was easy for the expert to see that the birds before us were, so to say, home-bred, for they lacked the dash and velocity of flight of the true migrants, yet they had an advantage over the last-mentioned, for they were in the most superb condition for table use, the result of good feeding and a life of comparative idleness. The nearer we approached the slough, the softer and more slimy became the soil, and consequently the more disagreeable to traverse, but who that has the heart of a true sportsman regards such inconveniences? Mark was my guide, and no better could I have, for who, I should like to know, was more conversant with the wiles and habits of all the broad-billed family? Up wind we approached the water, for this is as necessary in stalking wildfowl as it is in getting within range of the least timid buck that ever wandered through the Alleghanies or the Adirondacks. A market gunner would have emptied his first barrel at such birds as rested on the edge of the water or floated upon it, and fired his second the instant after the survivors took wing. Such may be the most profitable method, but we were here in pursuit of sport, not profit.

"Are you ready?" "Yes!" And both sprang to an erect position. Our presence caused a scare, you can be sure, and in a moment after each had singled out his birds and pulled upon them. Those that were aimed at were killed, but several others that chanced to be in the line of fire also fell. This is unavoidable where a number of birds flush together, and when such does occur, under similar circumstances to the above, of course it is a pardonable *faux pas.* I make a point of alluding to this as I have often heard English sportsmen hurl all kinds of ponderous ejaculations at the individual who would "fire into the brown of a covey," and to show that Americans of modern times are quite as particular as they are in not countenancing so disgraceful a proceeding.

In the early days of this country time was far too precious to follow field sports simply for the sake of amusement. No; the forefathers of the Nation took out their rifle or their gun with the express intention of filling the pot, and, when this was accomplished, returned forthwith to their chopping, splitting rails, and other drudgeries of a pioneer life. But time has changed all that; the United States has now gentlemen farmers and men of leisure, who shoot for the pleasure that it affords them, and are as anxious that their amusements should be conducted in an orthodox manner as are any gentlemen in the dear old mother land. The reader must excuse this divergence. I would not make it but that I know most erroneous impressions do exist about our cousins on the eastern side of the Atlantic.

Till the sun had got to the utmost perceptible limits of his western journey we remained in the environs of that slough, till twelve brace of mallards and duck were added to our morning bag; and what a grand display all the different species made together, when laid out side by side before being packed away in the body of my road waggon.

The results that I have noted are not unusual on the Western prairies, in the middle portion of the "fall;" but it is not for the number of head of game killed that I mentioned it, but for the reason that I consider a day's sport the same as above narrated, to be the *crême de la crême* of all kinds of shooting obtainable with the shot gun in either America, South Africa, or Great Britain. I read the other day a description of a day's cover shooting in an English demesne. The author handled his subject graphically and attractively. The nut-brown decaying foliage, the green ride, the rocketing pheasant, bouncing hares, and impetuous rabbits, all received due and fitting attention. Then the cheery voices of beaters and the sharp calls of warning to "Look out!" "Mark!" etc., were not forgotten, nor were the fascinations of a well-served lunch passed over without notice. The whole picture rose before me, and stood in front of me as I had seen it last year. It was truly dazzlingly attractive, but I asked myself the question: "Is such sport as is enjoyed by an English cover side equal to that obtained in the wild Western country? Does the first call out and put into practice the same true sporting proclivities as does the second? Does the former demand the same exercise of skill and patience as does the latter?" And I answer myself, "Certainly not."

In spite of the torture of burrs, the discomfort of wet, exposure to cold, and other serious inconveniences, I would give a day by an old country cover a second place to a day on one of our prairie creeks, in pursuit of water-fowl, and I think the reason—I may almost assert that it is the reason—that I make this decision is that in one instance the game you use your skill upon is partially domesticated, in the other a shot is never fired but at the free wild birds, whose range knows no boundary, and so may be hundreds of miles distant upon the morrow.

With those who have not enjoyed fall shooting on the western prairies and waters, under the conditions that I have attempted to sketch, it would be impossible to argue the matter. Therefore, I say to all, Go over and try your hand at it. The demesne is wide and broad enough for all, and when you have paid it a visit, if you be robust, and fit, and keen, then I venture to predict that you will become a convert to my views without requiring my eloquence to assist in canting the beam of the balance in my favour.

Shooting migratory wildfowl, at the commencement of winter, when severe cold weather in the north has driven the duck south in search of open water and food, is a sport that only lasts for a few days twice a year, viz., at the setting in and breaking up of hard weather. As may be imagined, to enjoy this sport to perfection, you should have a constitution of iron, and a frame of the finest tempered steel. Moreover, not to miss the arrival of the flights, you should be upon your ground many days before the anticipated arrival of the "fowl." If you have a few days to wait before the expected visitors arrive, your time can be profitably spent in examining the country, and selecting your future battle-field. Do not for a moment think that such time will hang heavily on your hands; wherever you go—if far enough from settlements—game of some description will be found in sufficient quantities to pleasantly occupy your vacant time in their pursuit. This will be noted especially to be the case, if a lengthened period of Indian summer precedes the burst of winter.

A few years ago I was summoned by telegraph to a friend's house. As indications in the weather predicted the near advent of winter, I started full of anticipation, energy, and hope, but was disappointed to find that the alarm signal was sounded too soon.

My host's establishment was a pleasant one, and himself excellent company. I suppose he must have noted an air of disappointment on my face, for he remarked, "It looks this evening as if you may have some time to wait before the break comes in the weather."

"Yes," I responded, "just my luck," etc.

"Not so. There is lots of fun to be had in the meantime. There are plenty of fox squirrels to be got if you care about rifle shooting. There are a good many hares in the brush around the winter pasture. A fine sprinkling of duck of all sorts, and snipe by the sloughs, as well as prairie-fowls, and if I mistake not, a good dozen of deer in the big cornfield, that must be fat as pigs, judging from the injury that they have done the crop."

I never spent in my life—previously or since—a pleasanter five days, for the sport I enjoyed in that brief period was wonderful, not so much on account of the quantity of game killed, as in the variety brought to bag. In my host's cellar, one night after dinner, we had a stock-taking examination. It was more than satisfactory, as the reader will agree when he hears the list. Nicely arranged and hung up were deer, wild turkeys, duck, prairie-fowls, partridges, hares—a true dwarf species of the *lepus* family weighing about four pounds—and fox squirrels.

On returning to his comfortable dining-room, we had many a yarn about past shooting experiences, and had reached about the time for our nightcap, or last glass of whiskey toddy, when the sharp, shrill bark of a dog rang out upon the still atmosphere without. Both listened for a few moments, then the angry voice was repeated.

"Aye, that's it, is it?" remarked my host.

"What?" naturally inquired I.

"That restless little devil, Garry, has got a coon tree'd in the orchard, I suppose; it's about the tenth this month; he can wait.

"No! let us go out for the fun of the thing; remember, I have not yet got so satisfied with these small incidents not to enjoy seeing the capture of a coon. Don't these beasts play the very mischief with your poultry?"

"Yes, certainly they do, but we have so many that one more or less does not matter."

So we got our hats, and a stick apiece, and sallied forth into the orchard, at the far corner of which we found Master Garry—a strong-built Dandie Dinmont terrier of about twenty-pounds weight—keeping ward over an apple tree close to the fence. Now that we had arrived on the scene the dog became mad with excitement.

The night was so deliciously balmly, clear, and still, that to be out of doors was in itself a treat. But I fear that the poultry destroyer did not contemplate matters in the same light. His position was soon discovered, for the leaves were already fallen, so that his fat round form looked like a big bird's nest against the vault of heaven. Poor beast! his restlessness showed how gravely he viewed the situation, and if I had had a voice in the matter I would have granted him a free pardon, particularly as a fowl more or less did not matter.

A youth, ambitious of distinction, climbed the tree with a club suspended from his wrist; slowly but surely he got within the required distance, then, with an adroit and powerful blow, struck the limb to which the poor thing clung. The coon jumped or fell, I am not certain which, but in his descent made an unsuccessful effort to clutch another limb, and in a moment after was at close quarters with Garry. A worrying match I have no fancy to describe. The dog proved victor, not without having to use all his pluck and power, and the dead game was carried to the larder and hung up with the other spoils. A few days afterwards I ate a portion of this beast; but whether it was the result of the cook's skill, or the tremendous appetite I had, it would be difficult to say; however, I found it exceedingly good and attractive food.

The last few paragraphs, of course, do not refer to duck shooting—this it is unnecessary to tell the reader

—but I recount it to show that the English sportsman, who goes to the West specially to be present when the migrations take place, need not necessarily have "a bad time" if he should arrive a few days before the flights commence to come in. Of course, all will not have their lines cast in such pleasant places as mine were, still there are lots of large influential farmers and ranchers residing in the very heart of the finest wildfowl shooting countries, who will not only be pleased, but delighted to entertain the strange *gentleman*—the visitor must be that; so democratic are they in Republican America—for the sake of his society and conversation.

Should the intending traveller be a bachelor and not inclined to turn Benedick, my warning is, take care, take care, for some of these prairie flowers are wonderfully seductive blossoms.

Yes; no doubt about it; the western prairie young ladies are "fetching," particularly those sprung from the old stock that settled in Missouri and adjoining states when all the lands thereabouts were Indian territory. This is not to be wondered at, for their mothers were Mexican, therefore Spanish, and their fathers the most venturesome and choice specimens of the Anglo-Saxon race established in the more eastern country. When a young Missourian in the good old times (?) wanted a wife, and he could find two or three companions who were of the same way of thinking, well mounted and armed, they made their way through the Pawnee and Comanche hunting grounds to the borders of the neighbouring republic, where they secreted themselves till they heard of a dance taking place at a neighbouring "puebla." When the *funcion* was at its height they presented themselves, and were immediately made welcome guests by the dark-eyed signoritas. But little time was wanted by the daring adventurers to select the beauties of the assembly. That being done, a signal was given, in a moment after, all lights were extinguished, and each caballero seized the darling of his choice with one hand and drew his revolver with the other, and pushed and fought her way till the horses were reached, when the watchword doubtlessly was "devil take the hindmost." I never heard that the ladies objected to this summary mode of obtaining husbands, but then it would be "against human natur" if they did, when by their abduction they got a stalwart Missourian instead of a dirty, lazy "Greaser." The reader will see from the above that the good citizens of the Western United States were not, in pluck and prowess, far behind some of our own border ruffians that flourished little over a hundred years ago. In fact, I doubt not that they learned this game from the example that the old country had set them. But for the ducks—the web-footed ones I mean now—without further delay I will at once attend to their case.

I had been several days killing time at a farmhouse in Nebraska—no difficult task, I can assure you—before the break up of autumn came. The locality was known to be one of the very best in all America for catching the migratory hordes on their way south, and I was resolved to be in time, so took that enemy by the forelock. Thus I got to the scene of operations before I was actually wanted.

The Indian summer had been late, and when it did come it lingered long, as if loth to part with our company. In the evening I sat out on the verandah, and my host and self enjoyed our glasses of good aged Kentucky, reputed to be at least thirty years old. I knew the brew well, for it came from the Louisville Hotel cellars when hospitable Philip Judge was partner in that establishment. It was just such stuff as is reported not to have a headache in a gallon of it, but this I did not put to the test, for the reason that I never took a gallon of it at a sitting. The tobacco was also very choice, and we smoked it out of the best of all pipes, those made from corn cobs, a custom my entertainer had introduced from "ole Virginie."

Never was, or could there be, a more delightful night; the mosquitoes had taken their departure some time back, so the only sounds that broke the solemn stillness were the honest, deep-mouthed bark of a neighbour's watchdog, or the bass "hoot, hoot" of the large-eared owl that had his home in the upper tendrils of a wild vine that abundantly enveloped from root to top a grand button-wood tree. The temperature about 8 p.m. could not have been many degrees below seventy, thus all things tended to present comfort; in fact, in the language of that *récherché* place of resort designated "the Bowery," it might be said that "everything was lovely," etc.

My host, with sweet affection and by the help of a lamp, was rubbing an oil-rag up and down the barrels of his well-tried and highly valued double ten, made by Abbey, of Chicago. On his face was a pleasant satisfied smile that told with emphasis how he revered that good and trusted weapon. Looking across the table at me, he said, inquiringly, "Do you mean to tell me that either of that pair of '*razeed*' breech-loaders of yours will kill a duck or a goose; or, for that part, perhaps a swan, as far as my thirty-six inch barrels will? Why, man, it is contrary to common sense.

"I don't see that; your argument would be, the longer the barrels are, the further they will kill. Why, man, you had better have a gun made that you require to get on the table to load."

"No, no, that's darned nonsense; there's a margin in all things."

"Exactly," I quickly responded; "that is what I say, and what I am prepared to prove, and that margin is twenty-six inches, as, when the time comes, I will show you."

"Right you are! right you are!" he answered, blithely. "You don't take me for an old 'know nothing,' that is not open to reason."

So we finished our whiskey and our pipes, little supposing when we turned in that a change of weather was at hand.

At four in the morning it was cold enough for me to require another blanket upon my bed; at breakfast time the thermometer must have been down to near freezing point, while fitful gusts of wind every now and then sung in mournful cadence around the chimney stacks and gables of the house. On going forth, big black clouds, solid as if cut out of boot leather, were rising higher and higher in the north-west, and an odd, straggling flake of snow drifted past as if not anxious to terminate its existence by making closer acquaintance with Mother Earth.

The season had at length broken, winter was at last come, and with its advent, of course, would arrive the migratory wildfowl.

Soon after breakfast one of the farm hands came in from a distant part of the ranche with a load of cord-wood; he was brimful of news for the "boss," so must see him. His interview was not delayed. "Boss, the fowl are come, the big slough beyond my shanty is full of them, and they are fairly booming around the lower part of the corn-field that had a miss-crop." This field had been drowned out in spring, so its produce was not worth gathering; but, to make the best possible use of the grain it had borne, five or six score of hogs had been turned into it, and, as may be imagined, its soil was trampled into a quagmire. This place was in the most splendid condition for a ducks' feeding-ground, and would remain so until it was frozen. A smart team before a light road waggon soon brought us to the desired place, and, to our intense satisfaction, we found that our informant had not one whit exaggerated his statement.

On the Kaukakee, or English lake, and at a big slough about ten miles north of Kent, Indiana, I have seen some flights that have surprised me, but this beat all my past records. On those occasions I made terribly heavy bags with a muzzle-loader ; what was I going to do now ? It remained to be seen.

In every direction that I cast my eyes ducks were in view, in large flocks and small flocks, with single intermediate connecting links between them, just as if keeping within feel of the adjoining bodies of their kindred. The corn-field seemed to be the greatest object of attraction, yet the adjoining slough had thousands of visitors. I imagine these last had travelled farthest, so, being worn out, required rest before gratifying their appetites.

The air around this open water fairly resounded with their voices, for each flight that approached it was solicited by their predecessors to alight, and the new comers clamorously accepted their invitation. No fear existed in any of the safety of the situation, for, without hesitation, all would turn in their flight and dash down into the overflow with such amazing rapidity that when they struck the water's surface it would fly in spray for yards on every side.

Then commenced such a preening of feathers, fluttering of wings, shaking of tails, and racing and diving, accompanied by loud exclamations of delight that the observer might well imagine that all the "creturs" had well-nigh gone demented.

Not so with the ducks that had selected the corn-field for their operations. Over and over it they sailed, some on such rapid pinions as if their very existence depended upon speed ; others with more measured gait, as if desirous of selecting, without fail, where food promised to be most abundant. At times all would appear to settle, when apparently some false alarm would again bring the crowd upon the wing, producing a reverberatory noise so loud and protracted that an inexperienced human being could scarcely believe that it was possible for such an ear-stunning sound to be produced by all the bird life in the world, if collected in a given area, from every known part of the earth. Well might the farm-hand say, "The fowl were coming in booming;" no better expression could he have used, for the combined sounds of their innumerable pinions resounded exactly like the "booming waters" of a mighty river when hurrying in a state of flood, regardless of banks, *levees*, and other obstacles, to launch its tawny overflow into the clear, blue-tinted ocean. It was a sight to see, whether by sportsman or naturalist; and it would be hard to say in which of their minds it would create the greatest wonderment. My host stood still in astonishment, and even my retriever looked none the less surprised. As to my own feelings, they were much the same, for, although I had expected to obtain grand sport, I never for a moment anticipated such an embarrassment of riches. I can only account for it in this way. The change of weather had been so sudden, that the flights that would have taken at least three days to pass were compelled to leave all together their northern haunts for the south at a moment's warning and that the depression of temperature had so rapidly travelled that no resting-place had been permitted them till they had traversed an immense distance. In addition to this, the large adjoining slough with an immense waste corn-field upon its margin, could not fail to be of great attraction to the hungry, weary, travel-stained birds.

All I have written has taken time to do it, but little of it was spent in settling our plan of campaign. The field was decided upon as our scene of operations, for it still afforded some cover, and comparatively speaking, dry standing ground, and, better than all, it did not necessitate my good, faithful dog wetting a hair of his bonny coat.

I took with me both my guns, for very severe work was before me, and about two hundred cartridges, thinking, when leaving the homestead, that this supply would be amply sufficient for all my requirements. Now, I knew that double, or even treble, that quantity could easily have been got rid of ; but I have no desire to beat "gunning" records, so felt satisfied with the good fortune that had fallen to my lot.

My friend selected his stand first, then I went about a hundred and twenty yards beyond him till I reached a trifling elevation of the ground, on which there still stood a goodly sprinkling of corn-stalks. About half a dozen of these I tied together, and thrust a handful of dead weeds into their tops, and so formed in a few minutes a screen that ingenuity and mechanism could not have improved. While this bit of work was being done I took no trouble to hide myself, nor was it necessary, for the birds seemed to regard me with such utter indifference, that they kept swinging to and fro, often passing within ten or twelve yards of where I stood. It was snowing, but not heavily, and the flakes were of the smallest size, yet the violence of the wind made them adhere to my shooting coat and cap, both of which were within a shade or two of the colour of my shelter.

Now commenced the work ; but spare me doing an impossibility by trying to describe each shot made. Some birds towered, then fell dead ; others, generally winged birds, came down slantingly, and with such velocity as to tear the feathers and down off their breasts, and even, in some instances, break their skins, while a third, amidst a perfect cloud of feathers, entirely collapsed, and reached the ground with its legs, wings, and neck stuck out in every direction but that they ought to have been in. Among the game killed mallard preponderated, then came sprigtails, and lastly common teal. When a gun heated I changed it, and so the sport went on till my stock of cartridges had most visibly lessened. Still, to my surprise, not a goose had put in appearance, and I commenced to recognize that the end was near at hand, for I was transferring the last dozen rounds from my bag to my pockets, when "honk! honk! honk!" fell upon my ear. Here they come at last, and I will keep these for their benefit. But the geese did not put themselves within range till I had waited over half an hour for them. The duck seemed to know my resolve, so, presuming upon the situation, swished past me at express speed, not unfrequently so close as to be touchable with a moderate-sized fish pole. The temptation did not break my resolution, and at length I got my reward. Two or three small squads of geese (*Anser Canadensis*) arrived; they were evidently prospecting for the information of the main body, so I desisted firing wild shots at them. To my disgust they wheeled, and seemed resolved on seeking other feeding grounds; but not so, for soon after the air resounded with their sonorous and melodious call, and not hundreds, but thousands of those handsome birds were seen making head for my screen, or its environs, each bunch being composed of from five to a dozen members.

I suppose the skirmishers who had been sent in advance to examine the country reported the field free from danger, for on came the various flights without halt or even hesitation. They were truly a grand and goodly sight, such as the sportsman could not behold but with the greatest satisfaction. Let me describe the best known wild goose (*Anser Canadensis*) upon the North American continent.

Its colours are from a jet black to the lightest shades of fawn, or even white. The head and upper portions of the neck are the former, the back and external wing feathers are a very dark brown, while fawn and white are charmingly intermingled along the lower portions of the body. Around the neck is a pure white ring, such as is to be found in some varieties of English pheasants, and gives the bird an air of smartness that it would not otherwise possess. In truth I never look at one of these geese that I do not think of a Philadelphia Quakeress in the costume of her people, which is in my eyes the perfection of neatness and unobtrusiveness, so totally destitute of aught that can be considered showy or ostentatious. The flight of the *Anser Canadensis* is wonderfully strong and protracted, and, although during stormy weather, it may be low, when the elements are settled I have often found its altitude so great that it was difficult to distinguish them with the naked eye, in spite of their deep, repeated calls keeping me constantly informed where they should be looked for.

Although I would not say that these birds are strictly nocturnal, yet they frequently make long journeys at night when necessity to do so arises from sudden changes of weather.

Snow was again falling, but in such infinitesimal flakes that it little interfered with my powers of vision, so I let the beauties come on, just to see how close they would approach before discovering my presence. When within twenty-five yards, simultaneously all threw up their wings till their pinions appeared to touch each other, down went their feet spread to the utmost degree of expansion, and in a moment more the flock would have been upon the ground, when I pitched my barrels upon the nearest bird and pressed the right-hand trigger; with the report two fell, while the second discharge earthed another. If I had hesitated some seconds longer all would have been upon the ground; as it was, nothing could have been more ludicrous than to see the startled geese endeavouring to regain their discarded velocity of flight. It was a scramble, a regular *sauve qui peut*, in which all were seriously retarded by their proximity to each other. Either from a desire to know what prevented the killed from joining their flight, or ignorance of what had caused the rapid retreat, back the flock came, and passed within forty yards of my screen. By this time I had inserted fresh cartridges, so two more birds paid the penalty of their rashness. For a few minutes after this I had some rest, but after that respite again the geese commenced to visit my immediate locality, in constantly increasing numbers. Their flight was so steady, their approach so apparent, that no one could fail to kill the game, unless he was like a Cincinnati friend of mine, who invariably shut both eyes when he pitched his gun to his shoulder. When I had but four cartridges remaining, I resolved to fire them at, such long distances as would give me enlightenment on the vexed question, "How far can a wild goose be killed with ordinary shot?" Circumstances permitted me to pick my birds, so all were fired at as the birds crossed me, at fifty, sixty, and sixty-five yards. I had most satisfactory results, but with the last bird, which I judged to be further off than either of the others, the result was different, for the goose soared and fell dead within a hundred yards of where I stood. However, such an experience as this does not prove much—unless that my gun held its shot well together, yet threw it with great force—for if the game had been in another position at the time I aligned my barrels upon it, the result might have been different.

The above is narrated with the purpose of elucidating the question, whether a bird like a goose can be killed with three or five shot under certain circumstances, but the success of those shots depends upon the position that the game may be in when the missiles are delivered. If a wild goose is heading towards you, however accurate your aim may be, at forty-five yards you may fail to kill, at longer distances if you have the object of your aim placed in a better position, you are certain to do execution.

A gun is frequently condemned because it does not kill dead at a moderate range when first it is used in the field, without any consideration being taken of the position of the game at the time it is shot at. The shooter, in consequence, loses confidence in his weapon, which makes him shoot badly, and further causes its owner to form far from a favourable opinion of the skill of the maker.

Another matter, old, possibly, as the hills, yet, like many good things, deserves repetition. Find out exactly the charge, by repeated trials, that gives the best result, and stick to it. Overloading with shot is the most common mistake, and one that will do more to prevent a gun shooting strong, or making a good pattern, than any other. An instance of this was most markedly brought under my observation, which I think worthy of recounting. A very intimate friend, a resident of St. Louis, never could get a gun to suit him. He was a very nervous man, and, as a natural consequence, a very indifferent shot. Moreover, the weapons he used were of the commonest description, such as were very abundant a few years ago throughout the United States. One day I chaffed him about a succession of egregious misses that he had made, and alluded in strongly derisive terms to the gun he used. " What ? why, man, it is made by one of the best old country makers ; look at the name—Egg, London." And, true enough, there was the time-honoured name deeply lettered on both stock and rib. Of course, it is needless to say it was "a fraud," but it took a long time to convince my friend that such was the case. The result, however, was that I was commissioned to order a gun for him in England. I and W. Tolley, of Conduit Street, London, undertook the job, and in due time the result of these skilful workmen's efforts was delivered. A few weeks after its arrival, I went to have a few days' shooting with my friend. He complained of his new purchase; it did not shoot well, and the recoil was sufficient to knock him off his feet every time he fired it. I was surprised, for from experience I knew what good work these makers turned out, but I had not far to seek for an elucidation of the mystery, and it was simply this, he was shooting an ounce and three-eighths of shot when one ounce was an amply sufficient charge, for the gun was a 12-bore.

My friend explained how the overloading occurred. An acquaintance—who it afterwards appeared wished to possess the gun—told him that high-classed guns required heavy loading, and that it was the quantity of shot that they could take made them so valuable. It may appear remarkable to many how an educated man could be such a fool, but there are so many men in the United States who have spent all their early days toiling in an office, and have only taken to field sports late in life, that very crude ideas about guns and gunnery will frequently be found to exist among them. In fact, I may safely say that among them are to be found as many Cockney sportsmen and Winkles as we have in England. It is almost unnecessary to state that when the charges were rectified, no better shot-gun could be found in the State of Missouri.

But excuse this digression. The experience which I had at the wild geese would be unique in Great Britain, but not so in many parts of the Western States, and, as a test of the killing powers of a gun, it could not be excelled, for all that was required by the marksman was to keep cool, bide his time, and make his choice of birds.

I had no hungry longing for more slaughter when the last cartridge was fired. I almost think that I rejoiced that my work was finished, for I had been most assuredly a favoured child of fortune.

When I had collected all my game into a pile, ready for the waggon, it really looked a tremendous quantity, and possibly there arose in my mind the ghost of a suspicion that I had been too sanguinary; but then it must be remembered that all these birds were migratory, and that if I had not arrested them in their flight, to-morrow they probably would have been affording profit and sport to a lot of half-bred niggers, who shoot upon the lower reaches of the Mississippi to supply the New Orleans markets.

My companion had also done extra well, but the performance of my guns he never tired of expatiating upon. This resulted in my making a convert to my belief in short barrels, and so thorough was the conversion that a letter was written that self-same night ordering a duplicate of my battery.

Next day the whole country was iron-bound—snow lay over it broadcast, and open water had ceased to exist. Unless to those well experienced in the lay of the land, it would have been no small matter of difficulty to point out where the sloughs existed. Being situated something like that venerable old nigger, "Poor old Ned," who had no further work to do, I packed up my traps, and bid adieu to country life for a time.

Another grand goose and duck hunt I had, but in a different part of the country. It was so eminently satisfactory, yet possessed of novelties in respect to details, that I feel induced to impart it to the reader, from the idea that he may be as fond of this description of amusement as I am myself. I was lounging about the Bates House, Indianapolis, trying to kill time (not waiting for a divorce to be granted [1])—rather a difficult matter in that superlatively stupid town. The hotel had a good cook, and all the delicacies of the season were abundant, and well served; but a person cannot spend his life in eating and sleeping.

Let me see, there were two other *divertissements* in vogue which I had almost forgotten—viz., hoisting the demi-john and fighting the tiger. The first of these means drinking Bourbon, the other taking a hand at "faro." Now, I hate soaking indoors, and always have the most confounded luck when I touch a card; so it may be imagined that I was no way loth to seize any chance that offered to provide change of scene and mode of passing time. Such, providentially, occurred. A legal friend had to go out West to settle some details about transference of property. He requested me to accompany him, and, as an inducement to make me do so, enlarged voluminously upon the excellence and variety of the shooting to be found in the locality to which he was bound. The bait took, so next morning I was ready for the road. I am not permitted to mention the exact locality, but it was a good hundred miles west of the Mississippi river. In due time we arrived at our destination. The country was far from attractive, and had a decided appearance of neglect, with a rapid return to its primæval state. Before the war, and, therefore, the abolition of slavery, I was told that fine crops had been raised here. Likely enough; but who has got a head long enough to calculate how many years that is since? However, land that has been reclaimed, and afterwards permitted to relapse into its original state, is invariably a favourite resort of game; at least, I have always found such to be the case.

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[1] Six weeks' residence in this State is all that is necessary to obtain a dissolution of marriage.

Duck were very numerous, but wild, so that little could be done with them except at morning and evening flight times, and soon the birds commenced to get so knowing that even this brief occupation got slow. Measuring land, marking out boundaries, and inspecting title deeds can be made to cover a lot of time by a lawyer, when there are fees attached to the process. Thus it was that I felt assured that two weeks at least would elapse before my friend would be disposed to retake to the road.

Well, we did a great deal of driving about the country that the legal luminary might get conversant with all the details necessary for him to learn, and a brace of double guns and a retriever always accompanied us. Wherever "bob-whites" and prairie-fowl were found most numerous, there my chum was certain to discover indisputable evidence that coal-oil existed—in more or less quantities, and such a valuable find invariably entailed a second visit. But better than undefined prospects was a reality that presented itself, namely, that wild geese were more than usually abundant in the locality; but the birds were as wild as hawks, and defied our getting within shooting distance of them, in spite of the display of such an amount of able tactics as would have certainly led an army to victory. Even the poor old horse that drew our waggon showed evidence of weariness, neglect, and disappointed ambition, and finally almost refused to get up a trot even when the road was good, and a less unfortunate animal passed him.

"It is a long lane that has no turning" we at length found to be a true saying. Passing a most disreputable farmhouse, we observed three wild geese tied to stakes a short distance in front of the door. They were certainly a sight to be rejoiced at, if judgment could be formed from the expression of my companion's countenance. "I have got it!" he exclaimed;

"we'll have some of those geese yet—lots of them—every man jack of them!"

I almost commenced to think that continued disappointment had so preyed upon his mind as to make him "luney"; notwithstanding, I begged him to explain himself. His answer was brief and to the point.

"Don't you see?—the very finest decoys in the world; nothing to beat them—nothing. I'll just jump down and buy them off the reel," and he alighted. My legs being rather cramped, I did the same.

A deal of hammering brought a garrulous old joker to the door, who, to his discredit, did not appear especially overjoyed to see us, for his salutation was too abrupt and terse to admit of any other construction.

"Now, be gone with you. I'll have none of you fellows dangling about here; my daughter is off to Cairo, so is the old woman, and I guess that she was hitched to Elisha Kent yesterday! Now take your hook."

"Now, my good man, just listen for a moment; do now. It is not your estimable daughter that we desire to see—nothing of the kind, I assure you—"

"Then what is it, by thunder?"

"To buy your beautiful geese, the wild ones before the door."

And the aged parent immediately cooled down, and ceased to present a formidable appearance. But he would not sell his geese, although ten dollars was offered for them, for, as he explained, he made a living by them. And a very poor living it must have been, judging by appearances.

However, the old man used the birds as decoys, so if we could hire them, and him with them, our object would be attained.

The veteran knew how to make a bargain, but as the greater part of the payment was to be taken from the results, we closed with him.

Next day we returned soon after noon. With us we brought a good supply of Bourbon, and were extremely liberal in dispensing it. The first glass had a visible effect upon our host, the second improved him further, but after he had imbibed a third, we spoke to and of him as "the old gentleman." Some might have taken this as a doubtful compliment; however he did not, and appreciated it in no sinister manner, as some thin-skinned people might have done.

About a mile from his tumble-down old caboose our guide and mentor pointed out a sheet of water, addled and feather strewn by the wildfowl that frequented it. Near by was a grass knowe, on which he pegged out his decoys, there being a distance of a few yards between each bird. This important business performed, he placed my friend among some dwarf persimmon bushes, and myself behind a clump of reeds. This done to his satisfaction, the fine old fellow mounted his venerable moke (it might have been Balaam's ass), and told us to look out for the game as soon as we heard him shoot.

I had forgotten to say that this grand old sport had brought a gun with him, quite his coeval. It had gone through many mutations in time, for it bore unquestionable evidence that in its early existence it had rejoiced in flint and steel ignition. As our new acquaintance departed to perform his self-imposed task, an onlooker would have sworn that he gazed upon one of Fenimore Cooper's heroes returned from the unknown, yet, if I mistake not, very densely populated land.

The hero that Joe Jefferson so inimitably represented, and Washington Irving created seemed to be before me, while in the dim distance beyond I could almost vow that I saw dog Snider, Sleepy Hollow, and the blue hazy Catskill Mountains, with the placid Hudson River flowing beneath.

Soon a distant report of a gun recalled my conjured-up vision of a past age to the far more material present time, more particularly as the game we sought was soon afterwards in sight, with several parties of wild duck hovering around them.

Well! they came, and were duly received, again they returned and met the same reception, till even my companion, who was a perfect glutton for shooting, thought that we had done enough.

On our return to the homestead, we found the newly-married couple in possession, and a cleaner built, more buxom lass could not have been found in the State. No wonder, then, that the old "crank" thought that his daughter was the object of our visit.

BEST GUN FOR SHORE-SHOOTING.

An American gentleman writes to me, "What is the best gun for the above purpose, as well as flight-shooting? as the use of punt, swivel, or stanchion guns have been interdicted upon the Chesapeake and all adjoining waters, and nothing can be employed against *fowl* that cannot be shot from the shoulder." The information here required would, doubtless, be interesting to some of our home sportsmen, more especially if we could get our Parliament to prohibit the use upon our coast of those small-bore cannon, that do an enormous amount of damage and injury to the true sportsmen's pleasure, and only gratify the love of adventure of a few gentlemen, or afford a scant living to a moiety of those dwellers upon the coast, whose time could assuredly be much better and more profitably occupied. My reason for writing in such strong terms against the use of stanchion guns is, that upon our ocean frontage, the limited amount of wildfowl that visit it annually, are so harassed by these abominable weapons that they dare not during daylight approach their sea-feeding grounds below tide mark, much less come further on to land-locked waters. Thus night is the only time that they can be pursued, and then only with those mammoth machine guns, destroying entirely any chance that the ordinary sportsman has of adding occasionally a few of these valuable birds to his bag, whether his beat be along the sea's margin, over bogs and fens, or by river banks. The coast of the United States from the Delaware south to Florida possesses the most marvellous extent of semi-land-locked waters possibly to be found in any part of the world, and they are provided with an abundance of all the choicest foods that ducks, geese, and swans can revel in. Therefore, a few years back, millions of these birds made it their winter residence ; but punt-guns soon altered all this, for firing at these feathered visitors at long ranges, at all hours of the night and day, so intimidated them that they were compelled to seek new shelters to avoid annihilation. Thus the winter pleasure of many of the farmers and land-owners, merchants and shopkeepers, was spoiled, and would have continued to be so had not their grievance sought redress at the hands of their respective legislatures, which, being composed of practical men, passed laws—yes, and enforced them—that no gun should be used in wildfowl shooting that cannot be shot from the shoulder.

The result of this wise act of legislation is that the migrant water-birds have returned to their old favourite haunts, and soon promise to be as abundant and afford as much amusement to the ordinary sportsman as in years gone by.

If the American coast could not bear with impunity the use of these gigantic specimens of firearms, how much less can our coast do it. And if market gunners and a few amateurs had to sacrifice their gains or pleasure across the Atlantic for the benefit of the majority, it is not much to expect—in fact, insist—that the same classes cease to follow an avocation that produces here much more disastrous results.

Shutting up the mouth of a salmon river with nets is a great injustice to those that dwell upon the stream's banks near the source whence it has sprung. Harassing wildfowl on the coast with punt guns is almost an equal act of unfairness to those that reside inland.

After writing the above, and no doubt stirring up the wrath and animosity of a number of duck punt owners, I will endeavour to describe such a shoulder gun as will, in my humble belief, be found the most effective weapon for shore-shooting, but it will take a strong man to carry it and use it successfully.

A 4-bore single-barrel breech-loader, 34 inches long, weighing from 12½ lbs. to 13 lbs., moderate choke, and provided with a heel recoil pad. This last addition is necessary, as considerable "kick" may be expected; but that unpleasantness much depends upon the length and fineness of the taper of the interior segment of the barrel. The probable charge would be about 10 drs. of black powder, and less, not more, than 3 ozs. of shot. However, this can best be known by making a few experiments.

Such a gun as I have above mentioned, with the exception of length of barrels, I used for the greater part of a season about Albemarle and Pampico Sound, on Cobb's Island, and the Chesapeake. No. 1 shot always gave me far more satisfactory results than heavier sizes; in fact, I doubt much now whether I should not prefer for all-round work No. 2 instead of No. 1. With heavy mould shot you can, once in a way, make a tremendous long kill, but you will seldom repeat the performance twice in succession. The cause of this is that many more birds are only wounded than disabled at these extravagant ranges, from the pattern of the shot becoming very wide and irregular. A 4-bore should kill with certainty (having an approximate load to that described) a single mallard flying at one hundred yards; on a flock at twenty yards further its effect would be very severe. Near Pakamoke Sound I killed two swans—both young birds—at one hundred and one hundred and ten yards in two following discharges, their heads and necks getting the centre of the charge. From the position of the wounds, the result to more aged specimens would have been the same.

At Cobb's Island, that bleakest of the bleak of ocean-washed islands, during a fearful gale from north by west—the point from which all the severest storms come on that coast—I made a most extraordinary bag of brant with my 4-bore gun. I had comparatively little shelter in which to secrete myself, and my dress did not harmonize with the sand and bleached grass that surrounded me, so the game gave me a tolerably wide berth, yet at over a hundred yards I frequently killed three or four at a shot. This island at one time was justly celebrated for the number of shore (wading) birds that visited it. In soft, still, balmy days they were generally very difficult of approach when on the beach, although easily lured with decoys, yet again this weapon on occasions proved itself to be a wonderful performer. Its barrels were forty-two inches long, ten more inches of metal to carry than I afterwards found necessary, and the experienced sportsman well knows what a comfort such a reduction is, both in regard to weight and improved facility in taking aim.

If my correspondent should, after what I have said, desire to possess such a gun, let him employ a good, therefore a careful gunmaker, to build it, and I have no doubt that his performances with it will afford him the greatest satisfaction.

WILD BUFFALOES AND PONIES OF AUSTRALIA.

VERY few people are aware that there are buffaloes in Australia, the real, ugly beasts, that have so often given the Indian sportsman no end of bother, and made him thank his stars when he saw their tails and not their heads turned towards him, especially if there were no convenient trees in his immediate vicinity that could be ascended. It is hard to say whether these brutes are more to be dreaded in Southern China than in India. In both countries I have had my adventures with them, but never was more persistently chevied from one hiding-place to another, than I was in the Shangmoon Valley, about thirty miles from Hong Kong; but this persevering pursuit, I think, resulted from my having a brace of pointers with me that would stick to my heels, in spite of all the strongest and most emphatic language that I could employ, to urge them to understand that for once their absence was preferable to their society. On another occasion at the same place, a dear friend of mine—alas! long gone to join the vast majority—was hunted down a hillside by one of these brutes, and was within an ace of being caught had it not been that he grasped the trunk of a tree, about fifteen inches in diameter, and swung round it at the moment that his foe passed him. Of course the species that I allude to is the well-known *water-buffalo*, quiet and docile enough with its native herds, but a regular fiend incarnate to all Europeans that may chance to trespass upon its grazing grounds.

Poor "Zoophilus," the best of naturalists, and the most genial of companions, often assured me that there were several large herds of water—or, as they are locally called, mud—buffaloes in Australia. About twenty-four years ago, if my memory serves me correctly, he published an article to this effect, but I fear that his statement received little credence. Now I am able to assert that he was correct, as I have always found him to be on any subject appertaining to the science he so dearly loved, and of which he had made a life-long study. But the reader must not run away with the idea that these ruminants are indigenous to that immense island, or continent, as some people designate it; for such is not the case. The introduction of the water buffalo to Australia is due to our Government, who, extraordinary to state, in a fit of liberality, brought a score of these beasts from Java, and turned them loose in the neighbourhood of Port Essington. So admirably has the country suited all their requirements, that from such a small beginning there are now probably existing in that section of country wild droves amounting to ten or twelve thousand head. From their original place of deposit, they have so far enlarged their range that some have been found in Queensland. Having relapsed into a perfectly savage state, they regard themselves as masters of the situation, and are prepared to dispute the possession of their demesne with all intruders. When an aged bull is driven off from his herd he will frequently take up his residence in the vicinity of a "water-hole," the sanctity of which he guards so vigorously, that horned cattle or horses ever give the locality a wide berth.

At present there are some squatters who occupy their time in hunting these brutes for their hides, in spite of the danger of the avocation, as they find a ready sale for them at most remunerative prices. Gentlemen who are young and active, and desirous of sport with a good spice of danger connected with it, could doubtless find all these requirements obtainable by paying a visit to the water buffalo ranges in the neighbourhood of Port Essington.

Another animal was also introduced to that locality by the government, and about the same period. This last venture showed better wisdom, but it has not, unfortunately, been quite so successful—nevertheless, it has been sufficiently so to prophesy benefit to the future colonists who may fill up the country. It was turning loose upon the shores of that little-known and unattractive land that margins the shores of Carpentera Gulf, near Alligator's River, a number of those high-couraged, fast, enduring little beasts—viz., Timor ponies. I have had a great deal of experience among the small horses of the far East, and can assert, without fear of contradiction, that all the various breeds—excepting the Japanese—are perfect prodigies among their race, although their average height does not exceed thirteen hands. Java, the Philippines, and Timor have each their respective representatives, and are each worthy of any amount of praise, but the Pegu pony "takes the cake." What they will endure, the weight that they will carry, and the precipitous country that they will traverse with perfect safety, is truly marvellous. Their appearance, moreover, is most attractive. The Timor pony much resembles its Pegu relative, and therefore cannot fail at an early date to be found a most valuable acquisition to a new country. The climate of North-West Australia evidently suits them well, for it is estimated by the Government *employés*, that there are now nearly two thousand of them wandering in a perfect state of freedom through the bush lands adjacent to where they were originally landed.

Talking about ponies, I think that the very best I ever possessed, and I had many thousands of Government animals to choose from, was a Manchurian that I picked up in the Corea. At a first glance, it looked a trifle long in the body, but it was so wonderfully ribbed up, and stood upon such perfect limbs, that the defect was soon lost sight of. I used it in every way, one day to gallop down pariah dogs, next with a load upon its back, and possibly on the third raced it against all comers, not improbably with the course well supplied with an abundance of rasping stiff jumps, and yet it never was beaten by anything that stood within a hand of the same height. Nothing ever seemed to affect its spirits or its appetite, and for it to sleep in a snowdrift, with the coldest winds sweeping over the steppes, had apparently been so common an occurrence in its early life, that it appeared to enjoy such reminiscences of its childhood. Before leaving China I sold this treasure to a "gunner," whom I trust it carried, and did as good service for as it ever did for me.

It is upon such animals as the one that I have been writing of that the Tartar Cavalry are mounted, so it is not surprising to hear of the wonderful forced marches these miserable soldiers can make when circumstances call for their performance.

SPORTSMEN-NATURALISTS.

THIRTY years ago, or thereabouts, I had many dear friends in the navy. They were members of our fleet stationed upon the Chinese seaboard, to support the honour of our flag and to protect our commerce.

I cannot say what was the talisman in that special service, but this I do know, that nearly all our distinguished sailors now figuring at the head of the roll of fame were at that period members of the small, select, and eminently serviceable force that did duty in these dangerous seas. To enumerate all my shooting companions of the sister service—for I was in the army—would be impossible here, but three I will mention, for they were eminently good sportsmen, good shots, and, if not erudite naturalists, were at all events well skilled in the delightful science. The present Admiral Kennedy, an excellent sportsman and naturalist, I doubt not, knew them, for he sailed the waters that laved the shores of "the Flowery Land" at the time I write of, and possibly, in their company, had many a brush with the *lally lunes* or *pilongs* that infested the archipelagoes and numerous land-locked seas that are characteristic of the Chinese southern coast.

The first was Lieutenant—for I know not what he may be now—Hudson, of the tight little gunboat *Leven*. Many were the days we enjoyed together, and the classification of the contents of a day's bag always afforded him as much pleasure as it did myself. Our love of sport, and desire to obtain new specimens, led us more than once into rather dangerous localities upon the main land, and that at a time when the Imperial Government at Pekin offered the magnificent amount of five hundred dollars for every "foreign devil's" head brought them.

Again, there were two other naval friends, both good naturalists, and in whose society I had many delightful outings, and doubtless I would have repeated those enjoyments, but death stepped in when least expected, and took them, with their brother officers and their entire crew, to a purer and better home than can be had on earth. Their names were Commander Colville and Lieutenant Fitzroy, and their vessel was the gun-brig *Camilla*. She was a splendid craft truly, about 500 tons in measurement, and had spars upon her that I have heard provoke even the unwilling admiration of a down-east Yankee skipper. Alas! those graceful, towering masts, I doubt not, but that they were the cause of her ruin. Whether the *Camilla* turned "turtle," or went to the bottom all standing, she was the unfortunate instrument of destruction to as gallant and smart a crew as ever sailed under our time-honoured flag.

Colville; Fitzroy, and self had resolved to make an ornithological collection, especially devoting our attention to water-fowl. Already we had a goodly number of specimens gathered as a foundation to our interesting work, when the cruel sea took them, and I never had the heart to recommence what had been heretofore a labour of love.

I saw my friends depart upon their last voyage. It was a mysterious yet fascinating morning when their anchor was tripped, for a fleecy mist, as fine as loose-woven gossamer, shut out the distant surroundings, yet was the smooth water bright and painted by nature's artist with the choicest shade of the most delicate blue. On the bluff at Yokohama, Japan, I sat to see the gallant craft depart. Under every stitch of canvas that could be set she stole away, till sails and spars, braces and shrouds, mingled indefinably with the ephemeral haze, and the *Camilla* became shut out from view as if she had entered into the "spirit land." Her destination was Hakodadi, and only the mermaids, if such there be, or the fishes, if they could speak, can tell how far the beautiful brig got upon that final voyage.

There are, I hold, sportsmen-naturalists and naturalist-sportsmen. The first look to the sport as the paramount pleasure to be derived, but enhanced by the beauty and the rarity of the game obtained, while the others shoot, enjoying the pleasure of doing so, but getting their greatest reward from classifying and setting up the trophies obtained. Among this last class can be enumerated such celebrities as my friend the late Mr. Blyth, curator of the Calcutta Museum, Sir Cornwallis Harris, and Charles John Andersson; but I may say of them that their whole lives were devoted to this enthralling study. No, it would be difficult indeed to take rank with these heroes I have just mentioned; but among the officers of the United Services there are many, very many, individuals indeed who can justly be considered sportsmen-naturalists, and in this rank, no branch of the service produces more, than the Royal Navy.

THE EAGLE'S BOLDNESS.

ONE "fall" I spent upon the upper waters of the Penobscot River, at one time the headquarters of the lumber region of that district, but as the valuable trees have got culled out, those engaged in that trade have left, and the land has relapsed into an almost primitive condition. Where bush fires have run over the country there immense extents are denuded of timber, but its place is taken by a luxuriant growth of under-bush, favourite haunts of that very game and delicious bird, the wood-grouse (*Tetrao umbellus*). In the heavy-timbered bottom lands the Canada grouse (*Tetrao Canadensis*) are numerous, but too tame to afford good sport for dog and gun. The residents do not appreciate them as articles of food, on account of that flavour which makes the Scotch bird so much appreciated by the *gourmet* at home, while the swamps and low-lying lands are abundantly provided with what are there designated rabbits, but should be known as hares (*Lepus variabilis*). The brooks, streams, and lakes swarm with trout and char, so in favourable weather the tyro as well as the adept can have no difficulty in filling his creel. Under these circumstances it cannot be wondered at that otters and minks are far from scarce. One of my chief pleasures was to float upon the bosom of some of these silent sheets of water, with a rod on either side of me, and a rifle and shot gun at my knees on the bed of cedar boughs that covered the flooring of the canoe, for at the time I write of elk and reindeer (moose and cariboo in native phraseology) were not unfrequently seen. Years before, these two noble species had been very abundant here—so much so, indeed, that the lumbermen almost lived upon their flesh. So indiscriminate and unceasing then became their slaughter that they had become all but exterminated, and certainly would have been had not the pine trees given out. Since then both elk and reindeer have been increasing, and there is every prospect that the stock will soon rival in numbers what it did in former years.

A Micmac Indian was my guide, counsellor, and friend. Both of us knelt with our faces looking to the stem of the "birch-bark." Very few were the words spoken by either, for the surroundings were lovely, and more disposed us to admiration than talk. Some distance in front sat a white-headed eagle on a rampike (dead pine tree) that projected over some very turbulent rapids, through whose tumultuous surface protruded many a flat and jagged rock.

A touch from the paddler with the blade of his implement caused me to look round, when a motion of the native's hand induced me to resume my original position, and carefully scrutinize my front for a view of something unusual. With the usual perverseness of white men's sight, I could see nothing, although the Indian continued to direct me. I was provoked, and so was he, but this did not mend matters. I almost believe that the Micmac thought that I would not see, and out of sheer "cussedness" was cutting up at his expense. But the wily savage took another and certain method of enlightening me. With several deep, strong strokes he landed me under a birch tree, whose drooping branches almost swept the watery surface and shut us out of sight from anything that might be alarmed at our presence. Then he took the bird gun, and glancing along its barrel, directed it on the object he wished me to view. I now looked over his shoulder and distinguished an otter eating what had been a two or three pound trout, and apparently quite ignorant of our proximity. I started up the bank to reduce the distance; the rifle I took with me, which was very accurate at moderate range. In my approach I had to go round some drift wood and several fallen trees before I again regained the water's edge. While hesitating to advance nearer, or shoot from where I was, down swept the white-headed eagle, as I imagined, to dispute possession of the remainder of the fish. In this it was unsuccessful, so made another dash and seized the otter, which was only a three-parts grown cub. After a violent struggle, the bird commenced ascending, but the prey made a gallant fight. I fired and missed; so before I could get a fresh cartridge in my discharged barrel both were hid from sight by intervening boughs. My attendant was equal to the emergency, for he now was well out in the river, gazing fixedly at the capturer and his prey. Soon he brought the canoe ashore, and begged me to hurry. This I did, and soon after we landed a hundred yards or so up the stream. Drawing the birch-bark ashore, he handed me the shot guns, and started into the bush "on a lope," I following at my best pace. Fortunately, we had not far to go, for the pace and ground were both very trying. After a little hesitation the Indian looked aloft, and in a fork of a birch tree were the eagle and otter, both struggling violently. As far as I could judge, the bird had caught a tartar, and wished to be quit of its bargain. Not so with the quadruped. It appeared to have obtained a hold of its foe's thigh, which it was in no wise disposed to relinquish. As the otter could not escape us if it fell to the ground, I shot at the bird, when both came to the earth with a "thud" that would have knocked a man down.

The eagle by this time was all but dead. Still it retained its grasp with one of its talons, which I think it was unable to get disengaged. My attendant now soon finished the affair by giving the otter several violent blows on the head with his paddle.

There is an explanation due to those readers who do not understand the nature of both the animals engaged in this contest. The claws of one foot of the assailant had entered so far into the back of its enemy that it was unable to extract them, while the otter, from the slackness of its skin and its extraordinary power of twisting itself about, had succeeded in getting hold with its teeth on the upper part of the bird's leg, and so maimed that member as to force it to curtail its flight. Hence their descent into the tree where we found them. I have been informed that there is no part of an otter that you can lay hold of where it cannot turn round and bite you, even if taken up by the extremity of its tail. A badger can punish fearfully with its teeth, but their bite is of the snapping order, and not unlike that of the greyhound, while an otter's grasp resembles that of the bulldog. The strength that the white-headed eagle possesses in its wings must be enormous, for it can lift a large salmon, say a twenty-pounder, from the water, and carry it to its eyrie, or, more remarkable still, do the same with a wild swan. Wilson, the great naturalist, has an admirable word picture of a similar event, the scene of which is laid on one of the great rivers of the Far West.

DIAMOND SIGHTS IN THE BUSH.

A FRIEND desires information on the above subject; so I will endeavour to give it.

The employment of diamonds to sight guns is a new idea, and if the stones were properly set, they would be of great importance for night or thick jungle shooting. Up to this date I am only aware of one firm of gunmakers applying the precious stone to this purpose—the reason is not far to seek. Other manufacturing firms doubtless think that the application of diamonds for this purpose is protected by a patent, but this cannot be the case. It is a pity, therefore, that more enterprising and higher standing firms do not turn their attention to this subject. At the present time the diamonds both in the fore and back sight are simply rose diamonds—that is, set in a solid backing, instead of being brilliants, producing the result that there are many positions a sportsman may be placed in where not a particle of light can reach them.

This has again and again been pointed out to the adapters of the precious stone to this purpose; but they, like many ignorant persons, refuse to be converted from the error they make, and this must be glaringly manifest to any person of the most ordinary experience.

If I utilized this adaptation, I would have the sights made in silver, with the diamonds properly set by a jeweller, when they could be attached to his rifle by any ordinary locksmith or tinker.

The expense could not be great, for small brilliants of a quarter of a carat have little more value than the cost of cutting, while their being off colour or straw-colour would add to their utility, as yellow stones are quite as sparkling, many say more so, for night use than those of pure water. The value of the silver used of course would be nil, but the jeweller, if exorbitant, might demand ten or fifteen shillings for his labour.

For one who is attached to African bush-buck shooting in heavy, thick cover, or at night, such sights would unquestionably be most valuable, and worth very much more than the estimated price given. They could also, with advantage, be fitted to heavy guns for either big or dangerous game.

It is quite a mistake to think that the stones would easily knock off; no such thing need happen if the claws that hold them are sufficiently numerous and soundly constructed.

At a " one-horse " place like a Transvaal village, of course, it would be impossible to find a skilled working jeweller, but such are to be found either at Maritzburg or Kimberley, who would not only be glad to undertake the task, but perform it satisfactorily.

About Ekowe, on the Umphilosi, and in the extensive forest lands north of Delagoa Bay, there are many wide stretches of bush where these sights would be invaluable, nor would they interfere in any way with day work. They should, of necessity, be kept clean, or much of their lustre would be lost.

THE BEST ALL-ROUND RIFLES FOR THIN-SKINNED GAME.

A RIFLE that is thoroughly effective, or even a smooth-bore upon all thin-skinned game up to seventy-five yards is the type of weapon that the wanderer wants in distant lands where the larger carnivora exist. It should be his companion by day and night—in fact, rarely out of his hands, and ever within reach—therefore it must be light and handy, and "fit like a glove," or it cannot fulfil the part it is intended for.

I can only understand why an authority like Sir Samuel Baker makes what appears to me a very obvious mistake in his work, "Wild Beasts and their Ways," from the fact that in his early days he was a wonderfully powerful man, capable of handling successfully very heavy arms, and so he jumps at the conclusion that the majority of his countrymen can do the same. This is a mistake; a 12 lb. gun, carried all day and used effectively when requisite, is a performance that very few can accomplish in our native land, let alone in a tropical climate. I am myself more than usually stalwart, and although I have succeeded in performing the above task, yet it was not without causing me great fatigue and disagreeable after results.

Mr. Samuel Copper, of the Maryland Oyster Police Force, a grand shot and keen sportsman, always shot with a gun that just exceeded 12 lbs. In stature he much resembled Sir Samuel Baker; but then, when his day's work was over, his favourite fowling-piece was consigned to its case, as it was not destined to be in his grip when a night alarm took place, or a long and wearying march had to be performed. Last, but not least, to be thought of on this subject, is that where hunting has at times to be done on horseback, as, for instance, in South Africa, it is absolutely imperative that the very lightest arms should be used compatible with effective execution, for, strange as it may appear to the inexperienced, nothing drags a man to pieces so utterly, as galloping over rough ground with a heavy and cumbersome weapon in his hand. After what I have above said, the reader will not be surprised to learn that I prefer a ·450 or ·500 double rifle for a constant companion to the ponderous ·577 bore.

But why use a rifle at all when quick and accurate shooting at short ranges is the desideratum, when the "Ubique" gun can be obtained? It was introduced by me to the public after being the result of careful study, many experiments, and great experience, and but for it coming thoroughly up to the purpose it was intended for, it would not have borne my *nom de plume*, "Ubique." It is, however, well to say that more should not be expected of it than the purpose that it is manufactured for.

A very old military friend of mine, and still a great *shikari,* told me when we were discoursing of "the old times," "If I had had such a weapon as the 'Ubique' when a visitor to your brother's bungalow in the Hills, I should have done wonderful work, for I was ever getting unexpected chances to kill big game, which my old muzzle-loader perseveringly refused to do."

If a country is very open, and very long shots have in consequence to be fired, a common Martini-Henry, or a Westley-Richards, will be found as good, if not superior, to any other weapon, but such is not the kind of ground where sambur, axis, and the larger species of African antelopes are generally sought for. No ! jungle or bust velt is their haunt, and seventy-five yards range will be much over the majority of the shots fired, and here it is that a handy, light, well-balanced gun shows its superiority.

WONDERFUL FISHING INCIDENTS.

SOME years ago, when fishing upon the Güül, in Norway, I heard the following remarkable performance told by a gentleman who had long rented a station on that celebrated river. On returning to London I took the trouble to inquire further into the matter, and thus it was narrated :—

A countryman of ours, of the name of Hornden, after having hooked a thirty-pound salmon, and finding it impracticable to land it where he was, plunged into the river with his rod erect in one hand, while with the other he swam the rapid current, and ultimately succeeded in landing upon the opposite bank, where he killed his fish in a workmanlike manner, to the delight and astonishment of those who witnessed this unparalleled achievement.

The hero of the above gained for himself the reputation of being the most expert wielder of the rod that had ever visited Norway, and he was known to have killed three hundredweight of fish in two days upon the Güül.

Another countryman, who prefers that his name should not be mentioned, killed, between June 19 and August 13, 144 salmon, whose gross weight made 2425 lbs. This was upon the Namsen, and occurred some years back, but it is very much to be feared that such a record of sport will never there be repeated in modern times.

A strange circumstance, but a true one, I will tell you, that occurred to a friend of mine when we were together fishing a tributary of the Shannon, not many miles distant from Parsonstown, where I happened to be stationed with the depôt of my regiment.

It was about the middle of August. The water was in rare fettle, and both of us had had good sport. My associate was, if possible, a keener hand than myself, so while I was taking my rod to pieces he continued whipping the water. At length he sung out to me that he was fast "in a grand fish." There was no necessity to tell me that; the bend of his rod and screech of his reel spoke plainer than did any selection of words to be found in the English tongue. It was almost dark before I got the landing-net under the captive. On examining the prize it was found that at least an inch and a half in length of firm flesh, and going deep enough to almost expose the vertebræ, had been bitten out of its shoulder immediately behind the head. Doubtless this injury was the work of an otter. This was not all the gallant fish suffered from, for in its lower jaw was a fly with quite three feet of gut attached to it. With all these disadvantages, this game trout (*Salmo fario*) fed freely, and made a brave resistance before it was taken from its natural element.

Since the above episode occurred, I have been disposed to think that cold-blooded animals—such as fish—do not suffer pain in the same ratio as do terrestrial ones.

LAKE PARMACHINI.

I SHALL never forget the latter portion of my last visit to the above lake. The Indian summer had set in with all its glories, and promised to be protracted. One feature of this season in North America is well described by the line in Gray s celebrated elegy :—

> " And all the scene a solemn stillness holds."

But this only mentions the extraordinary silence that reigns around you, which is further made effective by the hazy gossamer mist that shuts out the view of the more distant landscape, making the unseen a spirit land. But if your gaze is limited, you have enough to look upon in your immediate vicinity to rejoice the heart of the true lover of nature, and to elevate your mind to feelings of admiration for the handiwork of the Great Creator. What a wonderful world we live in, what marvellous beauties are displayed in it, what attractions for the human eye are on all sides visible, may well be exclaimed by the observer. Yet I do not enumerate one-hundredth part of the fascinations that are to be viewed.

At this season, the Indian summer season, every leaf, except those of the coniferous trees, has changed its colour, and the different tones of green have given place to the most dainty shades of yellow, the most ephemeral tinges of pink, and the more resolute and positive colours of umber, brown, and deep scarlet. It might be thought that there is no harmony in this variegated combination ; quite the reverse is the result, and poetry—not of words, it is true—but of vision, is produced. The dark conifers that crown the hill sides are the frame that most fittingly surround the above picture, and the effect produced upon the organ of sight, is rapture almost approaching to the sublime.

There are people, and, I regret to say, they are numerous, who deem the sportsman a person whose only pleasure is to take blood. This is a foul injustice to that class of men, for few of them are otherwise than the greatest lovers and admirers of nature. Their surroundings, when enjoying their pastime, have more to do in attracting them to it, than anything else that is attached to field sports, whether enjoyed on heather-clad hill sides, golden stubble-fields, or in bush and tree-sheltered covers. Moreover, the game that is killed becomes the food of their fellow-men, and, whether it be sold or given away, has one undeniable result, viz., cheapening the food of the masses of our over-teeming population.

Ay, Parmachini did look lovely in the Indian summer! Our camp was on a tree-covered bluff, from whence we viewed the transparent azure water. No tents had we; cedar fronds were our matresses, and a few large boughs of hemlock and pine sheltered our heads from the direction that the prevailing winds might be expected to come. The heavens above, our canopy, were illuminated at night by innumerable stars, each seemingly endeavouring to outrival the other in brilliancy, for, with the setting of the sun, the dreamy, filamentary mist takes its flight.

Where the Magalaway river left the lake to commence its erratic and headstrong course, was at our feet. Rocks here and there rose through the water as if to dispute the current's progress, but the main body of the stream flowed over very coarse grey sand or fine gravel, of all compositions the best adapted as spawning beds for trout or char. The labour was but insignificant to procure enough breeding fish for all my wants, the principal of which was to obtain a shipment of ova to stock our home waters, but packing for safe transportation was more laborious work. However, when my task was over I could not tear myself away from this lovely spot, and my rough but ever courteous attendant seemed to be equally indisposed to leave such attractions for the haunts of man. To prevent existence becoming monotonous I fished each day till I had caught enough for the coming evening and morning meal, then took my gun, and, accompanied by the guide's nondescript little cur, went in search of wood grouse, or beat the upper end of a marshy bay for sheldrake, mallard, or snipe. Possibly, while thus killing time, one of those sluggish, harmless animals, a Canadian porcupine, would be tree'd, but the unfortunate's flesh being a dainty fit for any epicure, its shelter was felled to bring the poor thing to bag.

This unmonotonous life was broken one night, and in a most disagreeable manner. I had just turned in, and my companion was performing the last office of the night by replenishing the camp fire, when the echoes and the screech owls were simultaneously aroused by a shout from the guide, of "Up with you, and get out of the camp, there's a blarmed skunk making tracks for your bunk," and I did "foot it," as quick as my feet would carry me, although my costume was of the most *negligé* kind, for I had vivid remembrances of my old friend, Captain M——, having to bury his clothes for six weeks before they became rid of the repulsive, sickening stench that a salute from the pretty little animal had given them; also of a farmer that I knew at Allcot, N.Y. State, who received some of this animal's secretion in his eyes when looking for eggs in his barn yard, the result being that he was blind for a time. So can anyone be surprised that I bolted and left the objectionable brute in possession? For doing so none could accuse me of cowardice; nay, on the other hand, my conduct was commendable, and the very acme of discretion. In the meantime my companion was giving utterance to the most horribly profane language, and I could see him across the fire, even nearer a state of nudity than myself, gesticulating violently, as if to give his oaths more effect. Soon I learned the cause of his culpable conduct. His tried friend, and much valued associate, his dog, was resolved to have a go at the skunk; the very thing of all others that we were desirous to avoid, for so far the wretched little cause of all our solicitude had conducted itself in the most unobjectionable manner, seemingly simply disposed to take a careful mental inventory of our effects. But that dog, that cur, that little mis-shapen wretch, would not listen to the voice of control, although coupled with most powerful adjectives, but made a rush at the heretofore innocuous animal, when, whew! let me draw a curtain over the scene, for not only were we stunk out of camp—that could have been rectified—but the guide's stogie boots, woollen socks, and blankets had received such an effectual charge of the terrible essence that it was almost impossible to approach them, and, as may well be imagined, my worthy friend did not have with him a change of raiment.

To return, however, to the principal *dramatis personæ* of the comedy the skunk was killed, and the dog became violently sick; but if it had retched its heart out, I doubt very much if it would have received any sympathy from either of us. I cannot understand how dogs will be so perverse; let them be flogged most severely, let them be sick unto death, attack a skunk they will on every available opportunity. This *contretemps* broke up our charming camp, which had long assumed a most home-like appearance, so we had to go forth in the darkness, into a strange locality, and establish and make a new domicile. But our labour in this respect was not a perfect success, for the blankets, boots, and stockings could not be deprived of their disgusting smell. However, I had two wrappers and a bear skin. The use of one of these I promised my friend. The last I saw of him that night, before I went to sleep, he was engaged piling cobble stones into his feet protectors before submerging them in the lake, where his blankets and stockings had already been deposited with an edifice of boulders over each, sufficiently large to make a cairn. I said just now, "saw him." That was quite correct, but I do not wish to infer that I did not hear him. That I did, and I regret to say that his rhetoric was more forcible than ever. I will acknowledge that the circumstances were trying, very trying indeed. They were these. As soon as the master got into a comfortable position, and sleep appeared about to come to his exhausted frame, his dog would attempt to crawl under his covering and get close to its owner, and as the dog smelt as strong as the garments submerged in the lake, I am not so very much surprised that some foul expressions should escape my friend's mouth, at an unguarded moment.

Next morning a change took place in the weather, which I anticipated from the restlessness of the numerous water-fowl, more especially of the lunes, or great northern divers. From break of day to sunrise these birds' shrill, weird call could be heard in every direction, evidence that strangers of the species had arrived from the north during the darkness, where hard weather had already commenced to set in. Snow in large flakes descended soon after it became thoroughly light, but it fell in that vacillating, shiftless manner that it ever does when there is no wind. For experiment sake, I took my rod and visited the Magalaway's outlet. The snow now fell so abundantly that I could not see twenty yards through it. Speak of fish being hungry, they were fairly ravenous, and, for expediency sake, I reduced the number of my flies to one, as six and seven pound fish seemed to be as abundant as ever I had seen those of smaller size. These were not char or *Salmo fontinalis*, but either *Salmo fario* or an undescribed species very closely resembling it. My guide knew them well, and informed me that identically the same species existed in Mooseluckmaguntic and Mollychunkamunk, as well as other lakes of the Renslier and Richardson chain. The condition of all the captives I made, proved that they had come to this shoal water for spawning purposes. *Salmo fontinalis* were also rising freely, but they had to be fished for in deeper water. They were also in the same reproductive state as the first mentioned.

Whether those unknown *Salmonidæ* were true river or lake trout I am unable to decide, although I incline to the latter belief. On the other hand, they were remarkably well-built fish, with very small heads, and the males were only possessed of the most trifling rudimentary hook at the termination of their lower jaw.

Here will I bid adieu to Lake Parmachini, which I hope at some future date to revisit ; the home of the beautiful *Salmo fontinalis*, but not of the rainbow trout (*Salmo irridescente*). On this occasion I left "the wilds" with my case of pregnated ova, by Atherley and Errol, as a more expeditious way of reaching New York. I was fortunate to leave "the wilderness" in time, for the winter next day set in with unusual severity, and the landscape soon after became draped in snow, to the depth of many feet.

A PLEA FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF THE RUFFED GROUSE

(*Tetrao Umbellus*).

TO preach about the attractiveness of a mixed bag, is to tell a tale twice over. Last year, in my strongest terms, I advocated the introduction of American partridge into this country; now I shall again advance the claims of a bird almost equally deserving of the same honour, the ruffed grouse (*Tetrao umbellus*). It must not, however, be confused with the pinnated grouse (*Tetrao cupido*), for although they have a great similarity in appearance and size, their modes of life and choice of residence are totally different; the former being found among timber or brush, or in its vicinity, while the latter chooses the open grass-covered prairies, perching upon trees only when the winter is very severe and the ground covered with snow, and then making use of such trees as are always to be found standing alone, and sparsely sprinkled along the margin of the immense western savannahs. Both these species are splendid birds, but the character of the ruffed grouse makes it much better adapted for a residence in the British Islands than the prairie chicken, and so strongly am I disposed in their favour, that I believe if once brought here, it would, as soon as known, outrival the pheasant in popularity, being a much hardier bird, swifter on the wing, disinclined to run before flushing, requiring the quickest and straightest aim to bring it to bag, nor are they much inferior to the Oriental favourite in beauty of plumage.

The ruffed grouse a little exceeds the red grouse in size, being almost eighteen inches in length, is very handsome and upright in form, of a beautiful rich chestnut brown colour, variegated with grey and dark impressions, and pencillings on the back, breast, and neck. The tail is grey with a black bar across it near its termination, and is generally carried, when the owner is not on the wing, open like a fan. On the top of the head there is a slight crest, and down each side of the neck are curious fan-shaped tufts of glossy black-brown, velvet-looking feathers. In April the birds pair, but I should imagine from the seasons in the northern portion of the United States and Canada being more backward than our own, if they were introduced here they would do so a month earlier. They lay from ten to sixteen eggs, their nest, which is a primitive one, being generally secreted in brush, or under the shelter of a fallen branch. They are most affectionate parents, and use the same artifices as the wild duck to draw away intruders from the vicinity of their youthful progeny. This grouse has two distinct calls, one a soft, mellow, prolonged note, generally used in gathering up the covey after it has been scattered ; the other an extraordinary drumming sound, made by the cocks in the pairing season, and capable of being heard a great distance in still weather. The latter noise is caused by a rapid vibration of the wings when the male is perched on a fallen tree or stump. Indiscriminately they live on a great variety of food—ants, grubs, elderberries, wild cherries, and grain being their favourite diet. Early in autumn, when the season is fine, particularly in the morning and evening, they will be found in the open cultivation, more especially if there be rough ground with cover in the vicinity; but as severe weather approaches the woods will be their constant resort. In shooting the ruffed grouse, great difficulty is always experienced in marking them, for the flight, as I have previously said, is wonderfully rapid, and moreover they have a method of doubling back in the reverse direction from which they started. However, as generally they do not go far (about four or five hundred yards), with patience and the selection of the nearest irregular ground which has young timber upon it, or the most dense bush, a second opportunity will probably be found of bringing more of the family to bag. All over the eastern and middle United States and maritime provinces they are to be found, being generally known by the misnomers of partridges or pheasants. Where the country is wild and sparsely settled, they are sometimes stupidly tame, almost permitting themselves to be knocked down with a stick. Frequently, when trout-fishing in the wilds of the State of Maine, I have come suddenly upon them, when they would rise into the nearest tree, and remain with unconcern, watching you with evident curiosity, stretching their necks, and getting into all kinds of grotesque attitudes; and so little would they then regard the report of a gun that I have known pot-hunters kill quite a number of the same family by always shooting the lowest bird first; but when the ruffed grouse becomes familiar with man it is perfectly cognizant of the danger of being in his proximity; for, although they flush close enough to shoot at, their colour harmonizes so well with that of the ground, that it is next to impossible to see them before they are on the wing, when, such is their impetuosity, that the timid, nervous pottering shot, with all his striving, would find it very difficult indeed to kill a single specimen.

In the undergrowth which springs up in that portion of the country where the timber has been destroyed by fire, markedly in the lumber regions, I found them very abundant, it being almost impossible to wander half a mile from camp or settlement without flushing a covey. Now the winters here are particularly long and rigorous, far exceeding in severity those of Scotland; still, the bird's natural hardiness prevents it suffering. In the Alleghanies and midland ranges of hills of the United States, it is also numerous, where, if the winters are less severe, the heat in summer is sometimes excessive, proving that the ruffed grouse is capable of enduring great varieties of climate.

The palate of the most fastidious epicure cannot fail to be gratified with its appearance on the table, the flesh being extremely delicate, with a reminding flavour of our red grouse. I have eaten it cooked in every conceivable manner, and whether it be simply roasted over a camp fire or formed into a portion of an *omnium gatherum* stew, it will be found alike acceptable. Although scarcity of food may compel this grouse to change its beat, still it is not migratory, as stated by some naturalists. This supposition has arisen from their being found in great numbers during autumn on the scrub-barren land, which they leave as soon as the more severe weather commences, for the shelter of denser timber. A family of these birds I was acquainted with for a year. On their range there was an abundance of food and water, and during that period I could always find them, their home being a little hilly island on the prairie's edge, which was covered with timber and brush, and detached from any other irregular ground by several miles of savannah.

Some authorities have placed woodcock-shooting first on the list of sport with the gun, and called it the fox-hunting of those pleasures in which the dog and fowling-piece form the chief accessories. As far as present British field sports are concerned, I believe they are correct, but should the ruffed grouse be introduced, and the sportsman once experience the suddenness of the flush of these birds, the velocity and irregularity of their flight, the uncertainty of their movements after taking wing, and the beauty and size of the game, they would assuredly insert a saving clause in their decision, or change their opinions. Much as I have said in favour of the American partridge, with equal fervour I can advance in regard to the ruffed grouse, still they both are very different, but the nearest explanation I can at present think of is that the former is essentially adapted to the requirements of the veteran sportsman, while the pursuit of the latter will tax all the strength of limb and impetuous ardour of our younger enthusiasts; the one is game that will afford the most delightful pastime, similar to hare-hunting with beagles, while the other will demand in its successful pursuit the energy of the highly-bred, dashing, courageous foxhound. I doubt not many, I believe all, of the warm admirers of shooting will agree with me, that there is a superlative pleasure in making a mixed bag, now a mallard, next a woodcock, perchance, thirdly, a partridge, and so forth—loading your discharged barrels, scarcely knowing at what species of game they will next be used. Yes, truly, constant novelty and change is a great additional attraction, even to field sports, and with our demesnes, parks, and forests inhabited by a goodly number of both these varieties, ruffed grouse and American partridge, in addition to their present tenants, the cravings of the most insatiable ought to be satisfied; and at a very trifling expense and trouble these introductions could be accomplished.

I should not, however, neglect to mention a drawback that this superb game bird possesses, viz., that late in autumn it feeds upon the berries of the American laurel, a shrub which is found in profuse abundance on the slopes and spurs of the picturesque Alleghany Mountains. This has been known to make the flesh of the ruffed grouse somewhat poisonous ; but as this shrub is unknown, or nearly so, in England and Scotland, such an objection could never be raised against them here.

For my own part, I think that the danger said to arise from eating their flesh is greatly exaggerated, as, although I have supped and breakfasted upon them day after day in almost all their haunts, I never suffered evil result from so doing.

LAKE PARMACHINI AND THE FLIES, POPHAM AND FAIRY.

I DO not think that perfect solitude is to be enjoyed at Lake Parmachini now, for, to my knowledge, there are two, if not more, permanent fishing camps built upon its shores; but in such a large extent of country as surrounds this placid sheet of water, and which is entirely destitute of a fixed population, any one desiring to lead a hermit life, need fear no attempts to intrude upon his privacy. There is no difficulty in finding the place in question, if the following instructions be followed. Get to Portland in the State of Maine; proceed thence by rail to Bethel, as pretty a New England village as can be found in any part of Yankee land; thence by the stage coach to Upton, on the Cambridge river, at the foot of Lake Umbayog, where a guide can be obtained to your destination, the trail following the course of the Magalaway river, the only stream that flows out of this sequestered sheet of water. If the visitor is fond of grand scenery, here he will find it in perfection, superior to anything I know of in the Highlands of Scotland, for the reason that the hillsides are everywhere well wooded. At one point, where an elevation is gained by the portage of quite two thousand feet, a grand view of the White Mountains of New Hampshire is to be seen, with

Mount Washington towering over all, for it reaches an altitude of over six thousand feet. From a ridge, bearing due east of Lake Parmachini, and only a mile or two from its shores, through the giant pine trees, may be viewed the whole net work of the Richardson and Renslier lakes, with their connecting river links and outlying tributaries. In fact, the landscape exhibits infinitely more water than it does land.

The river Magalaway is full of *Salmo fontinalis*, but the pools are almost impossible to get at, as the river bed has been worn so deep through the granite rocks, that there are few places where fifty or sixty feet of line would reach the surface of the water. For miles it is a succession of waterfalls, and round, dark, sullen-looking pools, on whose surface the sun's rays have never shone. Talk of the falls of Clyde, they cannot for a moment be compared with those upon this erratic, turbulent western river. The only place on earth that I have seen to resemble the Magalaway —but, then, it is upon a stupendous scale—is the grand cañon of the Rio Colorado. The ordinary volume of water that flows from Lake Parmachini is about equal to that to be found in the Eden, at Carlyle. But in spring, when winter breaks up, I have been informed that the grandeur of this little-known stream is indescribable. This I can well imagine. However, not far from the mouth of the Magalaway is the Burling Fall, the height of which is about, I think, 250 feet, and is, therefore, one of the finest cataracts on the Western Continent. When first I visited it the lumbermen of the upper regions were assembled here, shooting the giant pine logs destined for the coast market over it. It was early in June, and I can safely say that it was a sight I would not like to have missed seeing, and shall probably remember to the end of my life.

Small game is sufficiently plentiful about Lake

Parmachini to keep your table supplied, but large game is gradually diminishing; still moose, cariboo, and bears are to be found, but I imagine require a great deal of searching for. However, I will tell you of the experience of a backwoodsman, whose conduct I should advise you not to follow.

Late in autumn he desired to take a boat across the portage to the lake. For that purpose he harnessed his pony to a sled. With the hope of picking up some wood grouse, he took his gun, each barrel being loaded with small shot. When about half his journey was accomplished he heard a bull moose sounding his challenge call, and in a few minutes afterwards the irate animal made its appearance before him. All would have been well if our friend had remained passive, but in an unfortunate moment he was prompted by the evil one to try the effects of bird shot at twenty-five yards upon a beast taller than an ox. In a moment after the devil was to pay, and the ambitious backwoodsman was glad to gain an elevated, but far from dignified, position on an adjoining tree, from which perch he had to witness the death of his pony, and the smashing up into matchwood of his "dug-out."

I should advise all visitors to Parmachini to take a dog with them, and a good intelligent collie would be as desirable a breed as could be obtained. Plucky terriers are very likely to come to grief in such a country.

Before leaving civilization your expenses of living say, at a farmhouse, should not cost more than sixteen shillings a week. In the wilds, for two months, the cost of half a barrel of flour, half a side of bacon, two or three cooking utensils, and the transportation—that is to say, if you are disposed to rough it—ought to be the only call upon your purse.

If determined to live the life of a frontier-man, avoid all guides who may accompany the average run of sportsmen, as they are apt to consider strangers as trespassers in their demesne, and resent the intrusion.

The description of the flies Popham and Fairy I subtend, and trust they will afford you as much pleasure as they did me when fishing the placid, pellucid waters of one of the most charming lakes in the world.

THE POPHAM.

Hook No. 6.—Tail: Golden pheasant topping. Tip: Silver twist and ostrich. Body: Orange silk and gold twist, three turns of black ostrich, four small red feathers from the red-breasted crow of India; yellow silk and gold twist, three turns of black ostrich, four small red feathers from the red-breasted crow of India; blue silk and silver tinsel, three turns of black ostrich, and four small red feathers from the red-breasted crow of India.

THE FAIRY OR PARMACHINI FLY.

Hook No. 6.—Golden pheasant topping. Tip: Gold twist, yellow silk and ostrich. Body: Pale blue silk, ribbed gold tinsel, and silver twist. Legs: Light claret hackle. Throat: Jay's hackle. Wings: Four golden toppings. Head: Black ostrich.

The Fairy is particularly deadly in fine, clear weather, when a slight breeze is blowing.

THE
TRUE NEWFOUNDLAND DOG.

A FEW months ago an acquaintance asked me whether a smooth-coated dog that he had received from Newfoundland was the true breed of that island or not, and where he would be able to obtain a similar animal.

I took upon myself to answer him from my personal experience. The subject then dropped. However, I have now obtained information from Mr. J. B. Juke's work on Newfoundland, compiled from his experience while employed there as geological surveyor, which information very much bears out what I then stated.

"A thin, short-haired, black dog belonging to Mr. George Harvey, came off to us to-day. This animal was of a breed very different from what we understand by the term 'Newfoundland dog' in England. He has a thin, tapering snout, a long, thin tail, and rather small but powerful legs, with a lanky body, the hair short and smooth. These are the most abundant dogs of the country, the long-haired, curly dogs being comparatively scarce. They are by no means handsome, but are generally more intelligent and useful than the others. This one caught his own fish. He sat upon a projecting rock beneath a fish-flake or stage, where the fish are laid to dry, watching the water, which had a depth of six or eight feet, and the bottom of which was white with fish bones. On throwing a piece of codfish into the water, three or four heavy, clumsy-looking fish, called in Newfoundland 'sculpins,' with great heads and mouths, and many spines about them, and generally about a foot long, would swim in to catch it. There, the dog would 'sit' attentively, and the moment one turned his broadside to him, he darted down like a fish-hawk, and seldom came up without the fish in his mouth. As he caught them, he carried them regularly to a place a few yards off, where he laid them down, and they told me that in the summer he would sometimes make a pile of fifty or sixty a day, just at that place.

"He never attempted to eat them, but seemed to be fishing purely for his own amusement. I watched him for about two hours, and, when the fish did not come, I observed he once or twice put his right foot in the water and paddled it about. This foot was white, and an onlooker said he did it to 'toll,' or entice the fish; but whether it was for this specific reason, or merely a motion of impatience, I could not exactly decide. The whole proceeding struck me as remarkable, more especially as they said he had never been taught anything of the kind."

Now, I have known many dogs catch fish in America; but they have always been of the breed Mr. Jukes alludes to in the above graphic and entertaining picture.

The Indians know no other breed than this smooth-coated animal, and prize them for their sagacity and wonderful powers of scent. From such being the case, and their being by far more numerous than the rough-coated beast, I think that there is little doubt but that they are the pure and original breed of Newfoundland.

I am sorry to remove the children's favourite from the high position he has obtained; but justice is justice even to a dog; so let us depose "the fraud" and exalt the Simon Pure. But where did this brute, with the characteristics of the sheep and the size of the calf, come from? Or by what crossing of breeds was he originally produced? As the French had much to do with Newfoundland in its early days, doubtless the dog in question possesses poodle blood; not impossibly, also, some of the boarhound's; while the dachs-hund—that darling of many ladies—might also have contributed to propagating what has long been considered a pure breed. The last surmise looks far more than probable when we consider how many of the so-called Newfoundlands have crooked, big-jointed limbs, with the most atrociously ugly splay feet. Now all these three species are European continentals, with habitats not so far apart.

You enthusiastic supporters of dog shows, when the Newfoundland class comes up for the verdict of your learned judges, see that they do not in future bestow the laurel on a mongrel because he has the size of a jackass and the coat of a *mutton.* I am particular in this warning, as I have known just such recommendations weigh so heavy with the authorities, as to ensure their giving the highest decorations to curs that had nothing else than bulk to recommend them.

SALMON EATING SMOLTS.

CONTROVERSY on the above subject is highly interesting, from one point of view—viz., that from it we learn how salmon adapt themselves to modes of life suited to their habitat. In some waters they will not look at a fly, so can only be captured with the phantom minnow or trolling with a natural fish, of which none is so attractive a bait as smelts or parrs, the younger members of their own family. Again, in certain rivers salmon will not touch such baits, and utterly decline to be "cannibals." The Lune, I suppose, is an instance of these very rare rivers. In Ireland, in very nearly the same latitude as the Lune—viz., in Lough Neagh and its tributaries, I never knew a salmon to be taken trolling with either artificial or natural bait, while in some of our most famous lochs in Scotland, especially those which are feeders of the River Tay, fly-fishing is at such a discount that it is seldom or never resorted to. A kelt that has sufficient and preferable food to his own species will doubtless leave his relations alone, but I am strongly under the impression that it is only under such circumstances that he will do so.

Some of my readers will be horrified to see me comparing a kelt to a pike, but I doubt whether there is much difference between them in regard to what they will or what they will not, if hungry, gratify their appetites with, and it is a well-known fact that in some waters nothing is so alluring to a jack as a youngster of his own species. I do not hold that the moral character of a kelt is in any way deserving of more consideration than that of a pike. Salmon fishermen who have visited both the Atlantic and Pacific seaboards of America are well aware that on the first the fly is freely taken by salmon, while on the latter it will not be looked at by them ; but, on the other hand, that they are only taken by trolling with sprats, salmon fry, or similar silvery-coloured baits.

FLIGHT OF GROUSE.

Sutra-Mains is on the high road between Blackshiels and Lauderdale. I doubt if there is a part of Scotland that suffers in winter from the fury of the north-east gales more than this particular locality. It is no uncommon thing for farmers and cotters here to be veritably "snowed up." As the traveller journeys along this highway, he will observe what at first he takes for telegraph poles, but on closer inspection they prove not to be so. "What are they?" he naturally inquires, and the answer he will receive, if his companion be a resident of these parts, is that "they are to mark out the track when the heavy snows of winter hide it."

This is as dreary a "march" of country, and as steep a one, as ever four-horse coach had to tackle. For miles there is not a bit of shelter; and I'll be bound, ere now, many and many a pedestrian has cursed his luck, because he has had to travel it, when his face was turned northward, and he got the frigid, tearing, ranting blasts full in his teeth.

What a tremendous difference the seasons make to this locality. In early autumn it is as fair a spot as one would wish to look upon; at his feet lies Woodcote Park, its grey and weather-beaten Gothic peaks showing themselves through a dense surrounding of thickly-interwoven plantations of elm, and birch, and beech, while many and many a copse of golden blossoming whins proclaim the home of frisky rabbits, timid, big-eyed hares, and stately, pugnacious and gorgeous-coloured pheasants. Beyond Woodcote lies Saltoun, with coverts surrounding it, gradually rising up the adjoining slopes till they merge in an undefined line into the moorlands beyond.

Far off is Haddington, dreamy and smoke-wrapped, while further still—if the weather be clear—can be seen the Isle of May and the Bass Rock, both encircled with the waters of the German Ocean, on whose bosom lines of snow-white foam here and there proclaim the existence of rocks and shoals.

If it be harvest time in this vicinity, in whatever airt the eye may turn, is heather, heather, heather, gorgeous in its regal purple colouring, and giving that warmth and tone to country, that causes every poetic fancy of the wayfarer to run riot, and thank God that his lines have been cast in such a lovable place.

It was towards the end of the grouse shooting season, a few years ago, that I visited Sutra-Mains, with the hope of picking up a few couple of birds to take with me to dark, foggy, smoke-begrimed London. For days the weather had been peculiarly still, but threatening, for black, impenetrable clouds had long been banking up to the north-east. As I left the house I heard the venerable gardener say to himself, "The Lord be with the poor folks that will be on the sea the night." Ominous although these words were, I at the time took no heed of them.

My companion was a keeper, sturdy, and big as true rural Lowlanders of these parts ought to be. On gaining our shooting range, we found the game wonderfully tame, and in greater variety than I had previously seen them upon the march. Even the curlews appeared to dread taking wing, and thus had their numbers considerably lessened.

When stooping down to procure some water from a burn, I became conscious of a distant subdued murmuring sound, which appeared momentarily to increase in volume. It was not unlike the noise that might have arisen from a severe cannonade upon a very distant beleaguered city. But there were no cities here to be besieged, and if there were, the land in which I was, did not nowadays suffer from such disasters. More deep and intense became the volume of sound, but I was awoke from my reverie by my comrade urging me, to hurry and get shelter behind a ruined cottage ere the storm burst upon us.

The race was a long and hard one, trying alike to wind and stamina, but we saved our stakes. A few seconds after we had gained the lee of the sturdy walls, the gale broke upon us, and terrific was its effect. The heather seemed to prostrate itself level with the ground to avoid its destruction, and far as the eyes could see towards the Lammermuirs—which was not much—the herbage looked to be undergoing the same rough treatment. Thus far no snow had fallen ; at length it put in an appearance, and, gradually increasing in quantity, closed in the surroundings that were beyond twenty or thirty yards off. But distinct from the roaring of the elements there was another noise, broken now and again by intervals of cessation. I asked its cause. The answer I received was, " The muir-fowl are going south." " And where are they from ? " " The Pentlands, and may be from across the Firth." I waited my chance, and fired into the " brown of a flock " that were going past me with the velocity of migrating water-fowl : two of their number fell. They were grouse—veritable redgrouse.

Now if these birds had come from the Pentland Hills, as the crow flies, their flight before they reached our position was over ten miles ; if from across the Firth of Forth, a much greater distance. " Where do you expect they are off to ? " I asked. The answer was : " The shelters in Lauderdale," good seven miles more.

The surmises of my attendant in reference to the Pentland Hills being the starting-point of these grouse, I did not doubt, but for some of them to have come all the way from Fifeshire, I certainly was sceptical of. Others I know have had similar experiences to the above. Partial migrations of winged game, under certain atmospheric influences, are not unknown, and why grouse should not perform them I cannot see, for they are decidedly a very powerful bird upon the wing. How about landrails, which are so abundant early in summer in the North of Ireland? To the Continent of Europe they return in autumn, and to accomplish this must traverse two broad arms of the sea, yet it is well known that no weaker bird on the wing exists.

We are all too prone to jump at decisions in reference to the habits of wild animals, and to form hasty conclusions of their powers of endurance, or want of the same. This is simply the result of ignorance and not availing oneself of opportunities afforded for study. Moreover, all men have a craving after the mysterious, the inexplicable, the incomprehensible, and would sooner to one of these three attribute what they do not understand than take the trouble to unravel the mysteries by research. Unless it can be proved to the contrary, I am perfectly satisfied that a mature grouse, when in perfect health, can travel twenty, or even many more, miles upon the wing, if it desired or was compelled to do so.

SHOOTING NEAR TANGIERS.

BEFORE leaving England for Barbary be certain to provide yourself with such letters or documents as will prove your nationality and your claim to be recognized a gentleman. Our consul-general or his representatives will, on their presentation, take you under their protection, and the enjoyment of your future pleasure will lie in easy paths. However, if you choose to carry on your expedition in a "happy-go-lucky" manner, simply report your advent soon after arrival to both the English and American representatives, and if any harm should befall you afterwards, I should be inclined to believe that it will be owing to your want of *savoir faire*.

Ever remember that you are in a Moslem country, and that those parts of their religious habits, ceremonies, and manners of life that do not please you, must not be scoffed at, or criticized openly, for you are a visitor by tolerance, not by invitation. I have found the Moors splendid men, who, once you have gained their affection, will go through fire and water to serve you; moreover, they are greatly attached to field sports, and one who is a proficient in them is certain soon to gain their favour.

Hotels, too, are excellent and reasonable, but if my advice be followed, the town as soon as possible should be deserted, and tent life commenced in the centre of the scenes of your pleasures. October is the best month to visit Tangiers, when you can continue your sport up to the end of February, should such be desirable, and very seldom retramp the same "march." The cost of such an expedition may be made, by one of paring instincts, very low indeed, but the superior comfort and attention that will be received by a little liberality will go far to recompense for the outlay of a few pounds.

Now for the outfit. Two good bell tents should be taken, with a folding table and two or three folding chairs, a camp bedstead, bedding, and waterproofs, a good, sound, *well* stuffed saddle, a brace of pointers, or setters and a retriever that does not object to water work on occasions. A brace of strong, large, upstanding greyhounds will be very conducive to your amusement on off days. The battery should consist of two double interchangeable 12 or 10-bores, with a double Express ·500 rifle. For pig the last mentioned are wanted, but they are good for most purposes, except shooting small feather game upon the wing. Your clothing; such as you use in Scotland early in the season, with leggings substituted for knickerbockers, should always be used, for the spines on the palmettoes would soon tear anything else to pieces. This part of your outfit, of course, with your ammunition, will be brought from home.

Now for what I should advise to be procured at your destination. First, a head man who speaks English, and who should ever be at your side; a cook and a driver for the beasts of burthen, which should consist of three or four donkeys; but I would strongly advise a horse being obtained, for it adds much to your consequence among the natives, besides being useful in many ways.

The long-eared gentry are your baggage train, and each should be provided with a pair of panniers to carry your *impedimenta*. These patient and enduring beasts must not be too heavily loaded, for a dog or even yourself may now and then require a lift.

All the servants should be treated firmly, but kindly, and let them see that you consider the head-man their superior. Old Hamet, who often went with me, was a gentleman in every sense of the word; his cleanliness was wonderful, but he had the misfortune, not fault, that age had rather crippled him; so that, although the heart was ever willing, nay, desirous to get on, his power of body sometimes failed in enabling him to keep up with me. This I wish to earnestly impress upon the sportsman visiting the country adjacent to Tangiers, that he must personally inspect his people as well as his beasts before becoming their employer.

A few condiments and groceries, with light Spanish wine (very cheap) and brandy, should be taken. Game will form your principal food, but, supposing *toujours perdrix* becomes monotonous, kid can always be purchased at a very reasonable figure. At every *douar*, for a few pence, milk is to be found in abundance; it scarcely has a pecuniary value, but, as I said before, a *backshish* of a small silver coin will go a long way in establishing you in the good graces of the people. Thus you will learn that in this lovely land—one of the most lovely under the sun—you need never suffer from "short commons."

It would also be well to take some trifling female adornments with you, for there are Jewish villages about, and only from them can you get bearers to carry your wild hogs into camp, and such geegaws are a great attraction to them, for their women love them, and many of these Hebrew maids are of a particularly attractive Oriental type of beauty. The "chum" that accompanied me on my last trip there, was a Scotchman; his head was as red as the scriptural "burning bush," and he had as much sentiment in him as a "cuddy;" but he confided to me one night, after his sixth glass of toddy, that he had seen so many beauties in the long almond-shaped eyes of one Israelite girl, called Luna, that he could not attempt to count them between this and the next Sabbath. With the Moslem women the best plan is to pretend you do not see them, or look another way. However, they are all veiled.

Always make it a rule to sleep in your tent, for if you should be induced to pass the night in a *douar* hut you will remember it the longest days of your life. The interiors of these sun baked edifices swarm with fleas. Swarm, did I say? These lively gentry are in them in millions, and a healthy, full-blooded Christian is a *bonne bouche* that they do not get every day to feed upon, and they will feed upon you, do what you like to prevent it.

I have a vivid remembrance of such an experience, and expect to have till the day of my death. We were three in number, officers of the Gibraltar garrison. After a good dinner, partaken of in the open air, all retired to rest, pipe in mouth. Our agony forthwith commenced—for it was an agony. Candles were lighted and a search made; each of us was discovered to be a pepper-and-salt colour from the number of fleas adhering to us. Shake them off, brush them off, pick them off, were all equally impossible. Thus we resolved to sit up and smoke, and, of course, drink; the wretched brutes would not even then consent to leave us alone, but drove us out into the yard, where we made a night of it among the cattle.

The hotel that I have always patronized is in the upper part of the town and next door to the American Consulate. These houses, in height, exceed all adjoining, and from their flat roofs a beautiful view of the bay and surrounding country is obtained.

In the cool, clear October mornings, half an hour before sunrise, I know no greater pleasure than to visit this roof in your pyjamas, and have a lounge in a luxurious Oriental chair. Then is the time of day to enjoy your Mocha coffee, half-a-dozen or more of those small, exquisite golden figs, and afterwards a chibouque of pure Latakia tobacco. These three luxuries are all here unrivalled in their excellence, and are only to be obtained in perfection in a Moslem country. This particular variety of fig can also be got in Gibraltar, but they will not bear transportation home, from the delicacy of their nature. Served, floating in a finger-glass of iced water, they are simply delicious, and almost rival that prince of all fruits, the mangosteen of Malaya.

But, while gratifying the palate, the eyes need not be idle. In front of you stretches an entensive bay, not unlike in formation and surroundings to that of Table Bay, when the observer gazes towards the Blue-berg, but the water here is much clearer and a brighter blue than what surrounds the Cape of Good Hope. Moreover, it does not have small trees of kelp floating in every direction over its surface, against which the sea splashes and frets and breaks, destroying in no small degree the otherwise placid picture. The Bay of Tangiers I have frequently seen without a ripple, except when a tunny-fish or giant horse-mackerel dashed along the surface in pursuit of some school of sardines or anchovies. The big fish here seem "to have a good time," and possess little fear of either hooks or nets, for the dolphin, skip-jack, and albicore will often be observed in thousands playing the game of "follow my leader," while every now and again some sportive individual of the interesting *coterie* will spring eight or even ten feet clear of his native element, as if with the design of showing off his powerful yet graceful figure.

Again, the crafts that are at anchor or are drifting seaward are all of that picturesque felucca-rig peculiar to the Mediterranean. Before the wind they look exactly like immense butterflies, while on a wind, in spite of the great yard that they have aloft, they appear to be gifted, not only with wonderful speed, but special gracefulness.

Out in the bay a mile or so off you may observe two or three crafts plying their oars to gain their moorings. Truly they look taut and trim feluccas, and they are so, for they are smugglers, and have no doubt been engaged during the late dark hours trying to run a cargo on the Spanish coast. Even distant as you are, you can hear the sonorous voices of their fearless and weather-beaten crews, chanting the time, as they vigorously haul upon their heavy sweeps.

To the right, down the bay, lie the remains of old Tangiers; close to it and running some distance into the country are the ruins of an aqueduct. Some say it was built by Saracens, others by the Romans, thousands of years ago; *n'importe*, it is a goodly structure still, and has borne the battle that time has waged against it most manfully. Take your field glass, for you doubtless have one, and examine the country beyond the aqueduct. There you will find a white line. It is the road to Tetuan. When you have time to spare, follow it two or three miles further, and you will find excellent red-legged partridge shooting on both sides of the track. This species of bird is very large here, lies well to dogs, often found in the stubbles, and takes a terrible lot of dusting before being brought to bag. There is a watercourse of the clearest crystal close by; its margin is lined with azaleas and oleanders, all now covered with their lovely blossoms. Do not pass such cover thoughtlessly, for in it will often be "flushed" mallard, nearly always teal.

About six miles from Tangiers, on the Tetuan road, there is a very large fig-tree by a well; underneath its shadow is an excellent place for lunch. You will probably have for company some fine, handsome, manly, grave old Moor, sitting cross-legged upon his carpet. Look at him as occasion offers, and, doubtless, you will come to the conclusion that, if the earth were rent apart at his feet, he would not hurry, if it for a moment entailed a sacrifice of dignity. Such men have of necessity splendid progeny; one of the handsomest women I ever saw in my life was a daughter of a chief official of Tangiers. It was not a momentary impression, for I was several times in her society, and for hours at a time. On a par with this entrancer, I place an Andalusian senorita of Los Varios Dolores.

But supposing our sportsman has been out and killed a dozen brace of partridges, a duck or two, and a brace of hares, it is time to direct his steps homewards, for the gates of Tangiers close at sunset.

On his way back, near the ruins, he will pass a tidal creek; it runs several miles inland. When there is a heavy sea entering the outer bay, and much broken water along its shore, plover and duck are certain to be found in considerable numbers by its course, the good old-fashioned grey plover, and the brilliant mallard with his dusky wife. At the top of this creek there is a brush-covered hillock with grain fields around its base. Usually, early in the season, two or three coveys of partridges will be found there. After firing a few shots at these birds, and so alarmed them, you will have to shoot quick, for the way they will swing round the rough slopes of that miniature mountain is a thing to be witnessed.

After having enjoyed your dinner, return to the housetop; a hundred merry voices from the summits of the surrounding edifices will break upon your ear, while from the bay will float the manly songs of the crew of many a *contrabandista*. The sky overhead will be so clear, so many thousands of stars will fleck it, and the air you breathe will feel so invigorating and pure, that you will mentally exclaim, ere you "turn in," "I had no idea that this world was half as beautiful and glorious as it is!"

In the gardens that surround the town there is at times fair shooting to be found, woodcock not unfrequently being abundant there, but it is rather uncertain work, and the proprietors object to trespassers; so I should advise a start for the interior to be made as soon as possible. The direct course is through the "soke" or market-place. If it is a busy day it is well worth halting here for a few minutes, for you will be surrounded by a novelty of sights, yet withal so typically oriental, that you have probably never witnessed the like before. Amid crowds of groaning, screaming, fractious, bad-tempered camels, nearly all lying down, some loaded, others about to be, walk crowds of Moors, interspersed among them slaves, Bedawins, and free blacks, all robed in the picturesque costume of Barbary. Their upright walk, fearlessness of expression and soldierly bearing, proclaim at once their independence and courage. Many of these people have travelled from the upper waters of the Senegal, from Timbuctoo, Kanem, or even Darfur, and know more of the secrets and dangers of the heart of the Dark Continent than any Christian living. The distances they have come, the greater portion probably on foot, appear as if it were a trifle to them to endure fatigue, for year after year they repeat it, the only reward expected being the profits derived from the white man's manufactures, when bartered for gold dust, ivory, etc.

But pushing on, several mosques are passed, till at length "the olive grove" is reached.

The sportsmen (or party) having encamped on the firm, close sward that reaches to its edge, will now have time to turn their attention to the stretch of country that is situated in front, and therefore to the east of him. For over a mile in breadth (how many in length it would be hard to say) extends a *campania* that it would be difficult to find excelled in any part of the world, when field sports with dog and gun are the objects sought for. The greater portion of this *terrain* is covered with crisp, close, and most verdant grass, very seldom broken by cultivation, and where such does occur, it is only in minute patches of barely an acre or so in extent. The Moors are but poor husbandmen, so the stubbles and spilt grain they leave behind them afford not only an abundance of cover, but plenty of food for both fur and feather. Adjoining these miniature fields are always to be found large areas of palmetto, the reason for this being so is in the opinion of the inhabitants, where this beautiful graceful shrub grows, the soil is certain to be rich, and to have lain a long time fallow, so they break soil beside it, or cultivate in its midst. Through the centre of this meadow, for such it can justly be designated—flows a most tortuous, sluggish stream, sunk eight or ten feet beneath the level of the upper margin of its banks. The surface of this watercourse is covered in many places with dense masses of aquatic vegetation, springing from the richest alluvial soil. Wild duck and teal love such feeding grounds when found in any other part of the world, and why should they not do so here? They do, and many a broad bill of either of the above species will be added to the bag before the day's work is finished. The web-footed gentry are not timid here, for you will frequently see them drop into this time-worn watercourse, a hundred, or even fewer, yards in front of you.

Red-legged partridge, quail, and hares will also be found abundant, as well as a beautiful little bird, very scarce in our island home, the water rail. If it should be deemed desirable to spend another day in this locality, devote a portion of your time to hunting the margin of the low, brush-covered hills across the meadow. There partridges are very abundant, but every point will not produce a bird, for among the scrub will be found numerous tortoises, and all you can do will not prevent the very best broken setters or pointers "standing" them. On the next march, in three or four miles, the sportsman will find himself on the edge of a fordable river, about seventy yards wide. If there be two guns, by stationing them three-quarters of a mile apart, and sending a couple of your people to rove up and down the intermediate banks, good returns for some hours' delay can be obtained. From the river, the road leads through excellent but comparatively rough ground, more or less wooded, and in places swampy. Game of the species previously mentioned can be obtained here also, and not unfrequently with the welcome addition of several woodcock and a few snipe.

By this time "the *Laguna*" is reached, a sheet of water covering two hundred or more acres. It is surrounded by stunted trees, none of which grow upon the wet, low-lying land that surrounds it. This intervening space will be found literally ploughed up by wild hogs, while snipe will flush from almost every wallowing place.

There are two more of these *lagunas*, separated from each other by a short distance only. Their characteristics are identical, and good flight shooting can be enjoyed between them. All these sheets of water are frequented by mallard and teal, as well as coots and water hens. In fact, with an ordinary amount of labour each gun should be able to account for five-and-twenty couple of game in the day, the whole composing the most wonderfully mixed bag that can possibly be conceived.

To kill wild boars a host of beaters are required, and if such be a special object of the visitor, on his route to the *Laguna* he should call at the village of Sawnee, or Swanee, about four miles from Tangiers. Here the hunters of his Excellency the late Sir Drummond Hay used to reside, and among the present inhabitants there would be little or no difficulty in obtaining an attendant, capable and willing to organize your drives. Having made allusion to our former minister, with whom I frequently shot and hunted, I would say that he was a wonderful shot, and although, comparatively speaking, an old man, was one of the most daring and reckless horsemen I ever saw. True, he was always magnificently mounted; but, even under such circumstances, it constantly made me nervous to see him thundering down the steep side of a rocky hill strewn with boulders, where a fall would have been almost certain to produce death.

I came across a leopard one day, but it escaped without affording me a shot, although the vixen knocked one of my pointers fearfully about. That evening I sent information of my *rencontre* to Sir Drummond Hay. Next morning he joined me with a staff of beaters and a lot of dogs. A false alarm was given about midday that our quarry was on foot. His Excellency was at the top of a high bank, from which I deemed it positively impossible for anyone to ride, nevertheless he rushed his horse at it, and came down over a hundred yards of such stone and rubble that a pedestrian would have much difficulty in traversing.

Wherever your halting-place may be, the inhabitants will be certain to inform you that their melon gardens are nightly haunted by a wild boar as big as a *burro* (Spanish donkey), and who is the terror of the whole neighbourhood. It is quite certain that the males of this species do grow to a great size in Morocco, much larger than any I have seen in India, and that as frequently as not they become the aggressor, instead of waiting to be attacked, so are dangerous beasts to meet, especially if you are unarmed.

There are few parts of the earth more fair to look upon than this northern portion of Morocco, and its climate from October to September is simply superb.

PINNATED GROUSE

(*Tetrao Cupido*).

THE pinnated grouse, Prairie Chicken or Prairie Hen, is, in my humble opinion, one of the finest representatives of the grouse family to be found in any part of the world. Its habitat is the boundless prairies to the east of the Rocky Mountains, and extends in latitude from that of northern New Mexico, far up into the Dominion of Canada.

It may not be generally known that twenty-seven distinct species of grouse have been classified by naturalists upon the American continent, all of which are magnificent game birds, and, although they may run the subject of this article a very close race in regard to size and beauty of plumage, to the pinnated grouse, I, as a sportsman, give the palm, for the reason that they frequent open ground, admirably suited for the display of the wonderful qualities of intellect and powers of scent, which is to such an extraordinary extent developed in well-bred setters and pointers.

From the above statement the reader will see that I am antediluvian enough to prefer shooting over dogs, in spite of all that the rising generation may say to the contrary ; in fact, I am glad to boast of this *penchant ;* even going further, by asserting that killing game without their assistance, when their services can be utilized, looks to me very much like slaughtering for slaughter's sake. On this matter long dissertations might be written, but at present I will confine myself to the subject that heads this article.

We, who reside in the large cities of the United Kingdom, know the pinnated grouse by sight, for, during winter, there are few game dealers who do not exhibit it for sale in their windows; but to those whose lot it is to dwell in the country, let me say that the grey-hen, the female of the black-cock, is so like the Western bird, that few but experienced persons can tell the one from the other.

But the inquisitive, or those who desire to have more than a superficial knowledge of natural history, can at once distinguish the European from the American bird by passing his closed hand rapidly up the neck of the subject of his doubt, when he will find a number of long, beautiful, dark-edged hackles arise, under which the neck is perfectly bare.

The reader must remember that I do not say that these birds in other respects are exactly alike, but that they possess a wonderful resemblance to each other; and this resemblance is further increased when both are seen upon the wing.

Some years ago, I introduced the pinnated grouse into England; the late Mr. Jackson Gillbanks, of Whitefield, Cumberland, and a neighbouring landed proprietor, obtained from me several couples. A few weeks after the captives had obtained their liberty, the former gentleman and myself, accompanied by an old and very staunch setter, sought the liberated strangers. After some delay we found the birds sunning themselves on the sheltered side of a bank; they were not wild, so permitted us to get within twenty yards before they flushed.

Old Squire Gillbanks, who was a most keen and experienced sportsman, with an exclamation more emphatic than polite, insisted that they were black game; adding that this was the more remarkable, as none of that species had been seen in the locality for many years. On being assured by me that they were our American friends, he, with vehemence, stated that, but for my assertion, he would have bet his last shilling that he was correct.

In the commencement of the shooting season the pinnated grouse lie remarkably well to dogs. At that time they offer a very easy mark, and require but little shot to bring them down; but when winter is threatening, and stormy November denotes its approach, the birds pack, are difficult to get within shooting distance of, and will carry off as much lead —if not more—than the familiar wood-pigeon.

When Indian corn, or maize, has been left ungathered till winter has set in, in some of the large fields that have thus been neglected, I have had shooting from morning to night, and the hardest and quickest shooting I have ever experienced. To understand how such was the case I will explain. The stalks of the grain averaged over five feet in height, while the growth of weeds that covered the ground was so interlaced as to make walking excessively difficult. Few shots were afforded at less than forty yards, while the velocity of flight of the game aimed at, and the rapidity with which they took wing, could never fail to be a matter of surprise to the uninitiated, and of admiration to the experienced sportsman.

These birds usually hatch about ten or twelve chicks, which the female carefully guards, for she is a most devoted parent; so much so that she will do battle for her progeny, even to perilling her own life. However, if man be the intruder, the affectionate mother adopts the artifices of the wild duck, affects lameness or incapacity to fly, which tricks seldom fail in their desired result.

The greatest enemies the youthful grouse have to contend with are the little grey fox and the numerous varieties of snakes which always abound in the damp, low-lying prairies, the *massasawga*, or dwarf rattlesnake, being probably the most numerous of these reptiles.

When the pinnated grouse is excited by either love or jealousy, the hackles previously alluded to stand out at right angles from its neck, giving to the bird a very handsome and game-like appearance; while in the cock the bare skin beneath their feathers becomes inflated and assumes a deep orange colour.

The distant prairies, where the squatter and farmer are still scarce, are wonderfully attractive to the naturalist and sportsman, more especially in the early spring. If visited at sunrise, heavy mists will be found lying densely over its surface, while numerous sounds strike upon the ear denoting that the visitor is surrounded by invisible animal life; but the strangest of all these sounds is a most musical, deep and sonorous boo-boo-boo, far from unlike the lowing of a distant bullock. How this deep mellow note is produced is by the bird inhaling air into these skin and feather covered receptacles, and afterwards, with great power, forcing it out.

This is the call of the cock pinnated grouse. By rival males it is accepted as a challenge; by the female as a love call; so, from far and near, rapid wings will be noted in swift flight speeding to the place from whence the call comes.

After this a battle royal takes place, every cock attacking his nearest rival, while the ladies, demure, shy, timorous beauties, as of old, in the days of our tournaments, look on approvingly. Feathers fly in abundance; the weak and young get knocked out of time and retire, after which the conqueror struts before the admiring females, and, Mahomedan-like, adopts the most fascinating into his seraglio.

GOOD SPORT ON A LIMITED INCOME.

"WILL any of your readers kindly advise me what part of the world to settle in, where there is good sport, large and small game? My income is limited to 250*l.* per annum. Any hints on above subject would oblige." This is what I lately read in a weekly periodical.

Now here is a puzzling question to answer, as the inquirer gives no hint of his tastes, state of health, previous life, age, and capacity to endure fatigue, heat and cold. Of course I take it for granted that he is a bachelor.

Well, much has been written about Assam as a suitable place for enjoying field sports, and, from my knowledge of that part of the world, I should imagine that there would be little or no difficulty in making arrangements with some far-up country tea planter, by which the querist could lodge and board with him for one hundred a year, and have his entire time and the remainder of his income to do with just "as he darned pleased." For information regarding varieties of game to be found there, and the methods of hunting it, the editor of the *Asiam,* or some similar paper, would doubtless afford the desired information.

Sumatra is still unbroached by the sportsman; however, there are parts of the island that a few European settlers are to be found residing in. These, doubtless, would give a hearty welcome to a visitor. I doubt much if cost as to board and lodging would be considered here as long as the " new chum " was pleasant in speech and well informed. Game, particularly tigers and elephants, are said to be very abundant, but the coverts are so thick, and the clearings so small, that it is but seldom a shot is obtained at them. Java is not what it was, the *feræ naturæ* have now been driven back in the island, and the cost of such an army of beaters as would be required to ensure success, together with their transportation to the scene of operations, would require the very wide opening of the strings of a well-freighted purse to liquidate expenses. Moreover, the Dutch landowners do not all love Englishmen. Now to South Africa. To get to the haunts of large game there, and to provide yourself with the necessary outfit for carrying on the campaign, would call for an expenditure of twelve hundred pounds, a portion of which might be recovered on leaving the country. The last year or two, ivory has become very scarce—so much so, that collecting this valuable commodity cannot now be reckoned upon as a means of recouping the traveller for his outlay.

In Bengal, especially towards Nepaul, a lot of sport could be enjoyed, and that of a very high class, by a preliminary expenditure of five or six hundred pounds. After having made this investment you can take to jungle life annually for a few months, but nothing is to be shot there that is worthy of a gentlemen's attention to try to turn into coin, and so take the strains off a weak-backed exchequer. From year to year you would go on leading the same hugger-mugger life, till the sight of shikaries, beaters, rifles, etc., became as distasteful to you as the pariah dog that constantly invades your compound, or the aged mendicant that is ever to be seen outside your gates. Nor will this be the end ; in a few years a deterioration of mind and body will creep over you—the result of the climate and your idle, aimless existence—that no amount of resolution will be able to overcome.

Now I come to Northern Canada. To commence with, unless the sportsman is sound in wind and limb, capable of enduring fatigue and exposure, and possesses a temper allied to that of Job's, he had better not go there. But if he has got all these essentials well developed, then he can engage his passage across the Atlantic, and take his ticket for Pembroke, 100 or more miles west of Ottawa, on the Canadian Pacific Railroad. As places change their names in new countries, I will give you its latitude and longitude, viz.: 46 N. by 77 W. From 50 to 100 miles north of here, and therefore not very far from about the latitude of Paris, a country will be found intersected by numerous rivers—of which, if I remember right, the Coulougé and Noir are the principal—dotted over with many lakes, is hilly without being mountainous, where both large game and splendid fish, with an abundant sprinkling of nearly all varieties of American grouse and duck incidental to such a region, are fairly plentiful.

Before you rush into this Elysium, look well about you, and fix your plans for the future. The most respectable store-keeper you must make your friend. A well-filled purse shaken in front of any of the fraternity's eyes will generally accomplish this. Then, with two or three Indians, start upon a tour of exploration, remembering that the further you go from civilization the more sport you will procure, and the greater hardships you will have to put up with. Also that after the initiatory trial, things will go on more swimmingly. At first a cosy shanty must satisfy your wants, but soon you will be able to launch out into building a log-house. With a little skill these can be made fit for the residences of kings. Enter heart and soul into the labour attached to its construction, and that of tilling a small clearing, and you will be surprised how such occupations drive away *ennui*. Provide yourself with lots of books, and make a study of something, and possibly, nay, probably, you will live a happier life there than is enjoyed by many of the children of fortune living within our metropolitan limits.

CLAW IN LION'S TAIL—HUNTING CHEETA.

MANY old naturalists have asserted that lions have a spike, or claw, in the termination of their tails, and this belief was supported by Buffon. Most lovable of all English writers, Goldsmith, also took for granted what his predecessors wrote on natural history. For the first-mentioned I can offer no excuse; for the latter's error there are palliative circumstances. His kind, affectionate nature made him an ardent lover of the brute creation, and nothing afforded him greater pleasure than to listen to anecdotes about them, that had a tendency to raise his favourites to a higher sphere than was generally awarded them by his compeers. In a work published nearly half a century ago, I read many stories of the childlike simplicity of this remarkable man. It was stated in it that one of his chief amusements was to visit Wapping, Deptford, and similar mariner-haunted places, for the purpose of ingratiating himself with the ordinary seamen, and learning from them all information obtainable about "foreign parts," strange and distant races, and, more especially, peculiarities of the inferior animal creation.

It can well be imagined how our generous historian used to be victimized by "Jack," for he believed all that he heard, being too truthful and confiding himself to think that another would stoop to defile his lips with a lie. All the wonderful yarns that he thus picked up, as early as opportunity offered were committed to paper, so it may be imagined what an extraordinary collection of exagerations he ultimately possessed. One of these is good enough to mention here, and can be taken as a fair sample of many others.

A ship from Malacca was moored alongside a Deptford pier; from it landed a jaunty forecastle hand, whose intelligent appearance struck Oliver Goldsmith as indicating exactly the kind of person from whom he might learn something new. After the usual greetings, they retired to an adjoining tavern, where Malacca was discussed, and its indigenous animal life. Thus the babyroussa was brought upon the tapis. Our author could not understand the use made of its upper tusks, as they were neither suitable for rooting in the ground nor for weapons of defence, as they are so preposterously bent down at the points. The "gallant tar" was, however, equal to the occasion, so is reported to have answered: "You see, sir, where the babyroussa lives, tigers as big as bullocks are as plenty as blackberries, and they are uncommon fond of pork; so you see it would be no way safe for this beast to sleep on the ground at night; so it picks out a suitable tree, and hangs itself from one of its boughs by its tusks till sun up next morning."

With regard to the spike on the tip of the lion's tail, there are just the slightest, most flimsy grounds that can possibly be imagined for such a supposition. And they are the following: Aged animals of this species, and of both sexes, have a callous termination to the vertebra, and hidden by the long hair. This may be designated a callosity. It is doubtless caused by the tail coming in contact with brush and other hard substances when rapidly moved to and fro. The same can frequently be observed on dogs, especially among pointers of the old school, and land-spaniels of the present date, and, doubtless, from this arose the habit of removing two or three terminal joints of the tail of these breeds. In Southern France and Spain this custom still prevails in regard to pointers; but their dogs are constantly used in thick cover, while the animals themselves have an excess of stern action, now much modified in our modern beauties.

That this callosity should fall off soon after the death of its late proprietor I can quite believe, for I noticed during native wars in South Africa that, after a victim had lain dead several hours, the callow skin on the soles of the slain commenced to detach itself. Many of our officers who served in Zululand can attest the truth of this statement.

As to lions stimulating themselves into anger by lashing their flanks—well, it is as true as the baby-roussa yarn told Goldsmith. When a lion charges it carries its tail almost horizontally with the ground, and stiff as a mop-handle. Just previous to, or when contemplating charging, the tail is considerably elevated over the horizontal line, and entirely destitute of any movement. However, if the observer be sufficiently close, a twitching motion may be noted in the half-recumbent ears of the intending aggressive beast.

Mr. H. P. Malet's experiences much agree with mine as to the endurance of the cheeta and black buck, and therefore I think that Sir Samuel Baker must have left out qualifying explanations in the paragraph quoted by him, from that experienced sportsman's new work.

A cheeta for 200 yards, more or less, is, I believe, justly considered the fastest quadruped extant, but after that distance has been traversed, it knows its own inability to continue the chase successfully, for, having failed in its protracted effort to secure its prey, it will slink off in obvious consciousness that its powers have already been taxed to the uttermost.

There is no doubt but that a fairly good horse, over sound galloping ground, will run alongside a so-called "hunting leopard" in an inconceivably short distance, especially if you make the pace hot from the commencement. Not so with the black buck; its infinitely superior staying powers usually make the effort to overtake it an arduous one; however, much again here depends upon the suitability of the ground over which such a task is tried.

Well-bred, powerfully-built, upstanding greyhounds would have no difficulty in bringing to bay a cheeta, even if it had two hundred yards start; but with this amount of law granted—and it is almost impossible to obtain so little—a black buck would probably give his pursuers more than they could accomplish. The reason is this, the greyhounds make running from score, the black buck makes a waiting race for two hundred and fifty or three hundred yards; thus, when about five hundred yards are traversed, the dogs are nearly pumped, while the game is as fresh and capable as it was at starting.

The same I discovered with spring buck coursing in Africa. If by chance you get within fifty yards of this beautiful game before slipping the greyhounds, the course is certain to terminate in a kill, but double the start and the *finale* is different.

The greyhounds accustomed early to this sport learn their incompetency to overtake spring buck under certain circumstances, so very soon adopt the method of "running cunning." My imported animals, after a few failures, took to the same evil ways without education or example. After all, it was quite pardonable on the immense flats of Orange Free State and Griqua Land West, where the game is so much harassed by travellers, traders, and transport riders, that it will not permit a suspicious object to approach it nearer than four or five hundred yards before it indicates its intention of moving off.

Two couples of greyhounds I had with me in South Africa seven years ago were of the very best strains of blood procurable in the North-country, and they stood the voyage and long up-country journey admirably. When placed in opposition to colonial-bred dogs they invariably beat them; this I state that the reader may learn that I have just grounds for coming to the conclusions above stated.

The following may be interesting, as it proves how soon domestic animals learn to adapt themselves to circumstances: To prevent my greyhounds running themselves off their legs when treking up country, I had a large box fitted upon the tail-board of each waggon, in each of which a brace of my beauties were invariably housed when not in use.

When a spring buck was wanted they were released from confinement and shown the game. Immediately afterwards they would steal off, taking advantage of every ant-hill or bunch of karroo bush to conceal themselves, till they had got well up wind and on the course that the prey was certain to pursue. Having allowed full time for these stratagems to be accomplished, on horseback I made a display of being in pursuit of the quarry, when one or more of the spring buck were certain to pass within a measurable distance of where the artful hounds were hidden. The race was then short, brilliant, and almost invariably successful. Even with the slower country-bred dogs, under similar circumstances, the result was almost certain to be the same.

The spring buck of South Africa and the gazelle of North Africa I consider to attain an almost identical rate of speed, and in my humble belief both are fleeter than the black buck of India.

To find the fastest antelope I know of, the sportsman must cross the Atlantic Ocean and visit the New World. Since travel has become so fashionable, I may say universal, there are immense numbers of our countrymen who are familiar with the sole representative of the antelope family found in North America, viz., the prong-horned antelope (*Antelocapra Americana*), still far from uncommon on the vast plains and foot-hills to the eastward of the Rocky Mountains. I have never known them to be *fairly run down* by a dog, although on two separate occasions I have seen greyhounds slipped at them when the game had not a start of over fifty yards. I will not say, however, that the canines were of the best quality, still they were fairly good, but the prong-horns made such fools of them that there and then, and ever since, I have deemed this the swiftest of all cloven-footed game.

The Indians kill many of these interesting creatures by running them into snowdrifts, or alluring them within rifle range by displaying to their sight some brilliant coloured rag, or other novelty, that will excite their curiosity, for curiosity with these, as with other beauties I wot of, often leads to danger.

During the years that I have spent upon the grand prairies of the Far West, I never heard of an attempt being made to gallop down this wondrously fleet quarry—in fact, the person that proposed doing so would be deemed mad; yet I have known the spring buck to be so taken. I did not see the performance, but credible witnesses have asserted to its truth, so I will give the name of the gentleman who has done it, and the locality where the feat was accomplished, for it well deserves recording. In the Eastern Province of Cape Colony is now situated a flourishing town of the name of Craddock. In early days the Rev. Mr. Armstrong was missionary there and his son—one of the kindest and most hospitable hosts I know of in this wide world—when a boy again and again succeeded in this almost unparalleled task. His friend, Mr. Hilton Barber, also a grand sportsman, has done likewise, and if this should reach the eye of either, for "old acquaintance sake" I wish they would let me have some of their experiences. Whether or no, I send them both a hearty greeting.

THE BEST SNIPE SHOOTING IN THE WORLD.

THE heading I have selected is an ambitious one; nor do I, upon consideration, choose to alter it, unless, of course, it is proved to be exaggerated, when I will haul down my flag and acknowledge my error.

When, twenty years ago, I published a book called "Accessible Field Sports," many of the press took exception to the title of the work, because the scenes I described were across the Atlantic Ocean; but there are very few of our thorough sportsmen nowadays, who have not found the Rockies, nay, even their Pacific foot-hill, easy of access. However, I am not going so far West by many and many a mile, but will halt at the Central States of Indiana and Illinois—about eight or nine days' journey from our capital—for the traveller to enjoy the pleasure which he may anticipate. The expense of a two months' trip to these abundantly-stocked haunts of the *Gallinago Wilsonii* is not great—in fact, little more than a person of ordinary means would spend in the same space of time at home, about fifty pounds. It would be distributed thus: 20*l.* return ticket to New York; from that city to shooting-ground and back, 5*l.*; with cost of living about 1*l.* 10*s.* a week. If the sportsman stops at a farmhouse this last item can be reduced one-half.

To those disposed to follow my advice, and that no mistakes be made in reaching the proper shooting ground, I will now give such information as may be useful.

From New York (city) proceed to Cincinnati, and from there take train to Vincennes on the Ohio and Mississippi line of railroad. At the last-mentioned town all instructions and brother sportsmen can be found. But even minus these aids, I will put the visitor on his shooting ground without his requiring to seek assistance.

A quarter of a mile above the hotel, the railroad bridge crosses the Wabash river; traverse it and follow the iron track for about three miles, when a stock-house will be reached, and close by it will be found a stake indicating that you are 192 miles from Cincinnati. Before you have reached thus far it will be very unusual indeed if you have not had several shots at duck.

From the stock-house, running east, is a long slough—for you are now well out in the prairie country—which it would be well to shoot the south side of first, and the north side of when returning.

This slough is four or five miles long, and has an average width of from fifty to one hundred yards of open water. However, north and east innumerable other lagoons exactly similar in characteristics to the one mentioned will be found. The walking is always firm and level, although wet, but nothing more than a good laced ankle boot can resist. Wherever the prairie has been burnt the game will be found most abundant, particularly on such ridges as possess a sparse growth of dwarf persimon brush. However, on the edge of the slough the snipe will lie better, and the sportsman will be rewarded with more shots at wildfowl, which are particularly numerous here and of great variety.

A retriever, although not absolutely necessary, will be found most useful, but pray be counselled, do not take with you a brute as large as a calf. A water spaniel from sixteen to eighteen inches at the shoulder is large enough. Your game will all be walked up, so your canine friend must be under good control.

At the east end of your beat there are several prosperous-looking, comfortable farm-houses. At one of these you would find no difficulty in making arrangements to become boarder and lodger. All of them have a spare bedroom, and the charge for such accommodation should not exceed sixteen shillings or four dollars a week.

Many of these farmers are well-educated, and the society of their families—particularly of the young ladies—will be found most agreeable. Only take care that you do not lose your heart, it is not the first time that an Old Country bachelor has succumbed to the fascinations of a "prairie belle."

If the shooting and scenery become monotonous, keep going north, making a change in that direction of about twenty miles a week. A waggon for this purpose is always obtainable for hire, oftener lent out of courtesy and sheer good-will.

The snipe to be obtained is known as the English or Wilson's snipe (*Gallinago Wilsonii*). In it I have never been able to note any difference from our home favourite. True Wilson, the Great American ornithologist—a Paisley, Renfrewshire, man by birth—says that the bird that has received his name has two additional small feathers in the coverlets of its wings, in excess of what our own species possess. No doubt this accurate and close observer is right, but otherwise the plumage of both is identical, also their habits, flight, even down to the shrill and defiant ske-eep which they utter immediately after flushing, are precisely similar ; moreover, when served upon the table, the most delicate palate could not tell the one from the other.

They are strictly migratory, their arrival in the vicinity of Vincennes occurring in three different seasons, on March 8th, 10th, and 12th, according to my own personal observation. But no doubt their advent would be delayed or hastened by the earliness or lateness of the season. Their stay is protracted up to about the middle of May, but during this long sojourn I never observed any evidence of their nesting or even pairing. In truth, it is a well-known fact that they breed upon the immense "toundras" that margin the desolate shores of the vast Hudson's Bay. This I state in order to remove any qualms of conscience that might exist about shooting them so late in the season. The different sexes do not arrive together, the females forming the advance guard generally by several days. That the journeys of this snipe north are not long protracted flights, but a succession of short consecutive distances, is proved by their being in the highest condition when they reach Southern Illinois and Indiana.

From what I have written it will be seen that now (February) or soon, is the season to start for these well-stocked haunts, and I doubt not that there will be many anxious to undertake the jaunt, for I flatter myself that there is scarcely a sportsman living who does not regard good snipe-shooting as the acme of pleasure.

My usual bag, day in and day out, was from eight to ten dozen snipe, with several duck, but I seldom commenced work till after ten in the morning, and rested for more than an hour soon after 1 p.m.; but I have an entry in my diary which shows what can be done in this locality by an indefatigable sportsman.

March 27th, weather cloudy; wind gentle from

S.S.E. Commenced shooting at nine, rested half an hour soon after mid-day; went to slough to wait for ducks and geese at sunset. 147 snipe, 11 duck (various), 2 curlews (*Numenius arquatus*), 2 geese (*Anser canadensis*).

Now, will the reader say, after reading the above score, that I have adopted too ambitious a title in my heading, "The best snipe shooting in the world"?

SHOOTING IN ALGERIA.

SUPPOSE Malta to be your starting-place, and I should advise you to make it so—unless compelled to do otherwise—for good and seaworthy boats are easily obtained at Valetta, and at moderate prices. On leaving the grand harbour steer so as to pass the Island of Panteleria a little to the northward, after which bear away to Cape Bon, from where, by making a due west course, you will find yourself between the islands of Galita and the mainland. On close inspection of the African coast, a bay a mile deep, and entirely land-locked, will be found, the shores of which are hilly and extremely picturesque. The vegetation upon them is a fair mixture of grass and palmetto. The islands of Galita are, I think, three in number, very flat on the surface, and quite insignificant in size. On the larger one is a building, easily discerned from the sea, erected as a shelter for the sponge and coral fishermen. Your captain and crew, if they follow the coasting trade—and no others should be engaged—will know the bay opposite well, for it is a favourite refuge for such people to take shelter in when bad weather occurs.

The distance from Malta to this charming little haven is about 350 miles by the course sailed in favourable weather, and about 250 miles as the crow flies.

After passing over the first ridge of hills from the landing-place plenty of timber will be found in such hollows or valleys as are sheltered from the sea breeze, these covers increasing in size as the visitors progress inland.

If setters or pointers are taken, small game, such as red-legged partridge, hares, and, at the proper season of the year, an abundance of quail, will be found immediately after stepping upon shore. In the brush woodcock are frequently numerous, also wild fowl in the low-lying damp grounds. Wild boar also are plentiful, where there is sufficient bush and timber to afford them suitable shelter.

Lions were common here (although I did not see any), and probably are so now. My information on this point was doubtless correct, as it was obtained from the natives. However, the spoor of leopards I frequently saw, and this was not surprising, for their favourite prey, apes, fairly swarmed.

The people were very civil and obliging, and, like the Mussulman population of Barbary, keen sportsmen, thus no difficulty was experienced in obtaining guides, the recompense for their services being almost nominal. A town called Masarck is a day's journey by horse, almost due west, but inland.

The latitude is about 37 N., longitude 7 E., if I remember rightly, but a navigator's chart of the coast would give such details correctly.

If the party consist of four, the craft they charter should be about twenty tons. I should think that a month's trip might be had at an expense of very little over 12*l.* per head—that is, of course, with economical management.

A permit to land, also to take ashore arms and ammunition, must be procured from the French Consul at Valetta before sailing.

As oil and garlic are large items in the dietary of the crew, our countrymen would do well not to turn up their noses, and do an ominous growl, when those sensitive organs get a stronger whiff of both than is pleasant.

To sum up, let the visitor carefully avoid all towns, more especially if they have military stationed in them, for these warrior pot-hunters are ever out on the prowl after any description of beast or bird that can be turned into a *ragout* or *paté*.

THE CANADIAN OR SPRUCE GROUSE

(*Tetrao Canadensis*).

THIS bird, which more closely resembles the red grouse of Scotland than any other species of this genus that I am acquainted with, is far from as well-known by the white man as the *Tetrao umbellus* or *Tetrao cupido*, for the reason that its haunts are in the most inaccessible portions of the country, and are usually unsuitable to the uses of either the pastoral or agricultural farmer.

On the spurs of the lofty ranges of mountains that cross the western part of the State of Maine and New Hampshire, where the pine, hemlock, and cedar dispute possession of the landscape, and where the whole country is dotted over with innumerable lakes fed by countless rivulets and brooks, I first became acquainted with this beauty of the feathered creation, for assuredly it is a beauty, and anyone who has seen it will heartily agree with me in this estimate.

Its capacities for enduring the rigours of an almost Arctic winter are truly surprising. However, it adopts one power of protection from the severe cold, especially when it is accompanied by wind, namely, burrowing in the snow. To see this operation performed has a strong tendency to create astonishment, if not almost disbelief, in the beholder's eyes ; at least, it did so to me, and no wonder ; but I will explain. The sportsman or traveller sees this bird perched upon a tree ; with a swoop it descends to the snowy surface, and instantly disappears, as if by magic. If the snow is dry and powdery the orifice the bird makes closes instantly up. When the snow has been sufficiently penetrated, the bird rapidly progresses in whatever direction it desires to go through the aid it receives from its powerful legs.

In summer the Canadian or spruce grouse haunts are invariably the hillsides that are covered with timber. So far I have never yet found it in the open, but when winter sets in the cedar and the hemlock swamps become its residence. When found in the first-mentioned haunts it is far from a tame bird, but in the latter it is so regardless of the presence of strangers that I have known them sit on the bough of a tree till a horsehair snare has been passed over their heads.

Although these birds are smaller than the Scotch grouse they might easily be taken for the same species, particularly immediately after they are killed, but if time is allowed for the body to stiffen, the brilliant red of the iris fades into a dirty chocolate brown. The eggs also have great similarity both in size and colour to those of our home-bred beauties.

In Canada and the Northern States they are not much esteemed upon the table, but why, may well be asked; simply for the reason that their flavour out-Herods Herod, or is stronger in that delicious game taste that connoisseurs of good living so highly appreciate in Scotch birds.

I have no doubt but that this species would do well if introduced into those portions of North Britain where woods are numerous; in fact, the *habitat* that suits the capercailzie, in my belief, would exactly suit this indigenous American bird.

As I am a great advocate for mixed bags, and consider the pleasure of shooting much enhanced by obtaining such, I would strongly advocate those who have suitable lands for their haunt, to introduce into this country the Canadian or spruce grouse.

GIRAFFE HUNTING AND WILD LIFE IN TROPICAL AFRICA.

NORTH of the tropical line of Capricorn, in South Africa, particularly in the interior, and well away from the sea-board, is to be found the best stocked hunting country in the world. Some Indian sportsmen may dispute the correctness of this statement, but I will give my reasons for considering it to be so ; after having read them, possibly my Eastern brothers may become converts to my way of thinking.

One thing I would say before proceeding further—and may it act as a solatium to what I have above written—that the very best sportsmen with rifle, horse, and spear that I have ever met, were officers of our Indian Empire, or civilians that had made that country their home. To mention the name of one of these gentlemen would be invidious, for all were prodigies, so I state without fear of contradiction that I have seen a large boar—a regular fighting and jinking devil—done to death by four subalterns, all of whom were riding without a saddle, and only a watering headstall and plain snaffle to guide their mounts by. There are doubtless quite as good men to be found in India now as heretofore, but I defy it to produce better. I write of more than a quarter of a century ago, and with all those intervening years over my head, I often think what material that was to make light cavalry of, and no other country in the world could produce the like. Hobson's, Fane's, and Probyn's "Horse" were born or nurtured in India; their excellence has long been acknowledged, and to the hunting field, as the grand instructor, I award the palm over all tutors, teachers, masters, and adjutants in bringing these admirable corps of *bon sabreurs* to the perfection which they so conspicuously displayed.

But, referring to the hunting ground in tropical Africa that I have alluded to, I will make a brief summary of the game to be found within its limits. Almost all the antelopes abound here, from the massive, ponderous eland to the diminutive blue-bok, the first being as large as a stall-fed ox, the latter scarcely exceeding a hare in weight. Between these diverse animals exist so many species, that although to enumerate them would not be impossible, yet to place their respective names upon paper, and recapitulate their special merits and appearance, would take more space than the size of this work will allow.

The rifle, of course, has much reduced the numbers of the antelope family to be found in this elysium, so at the present date hundreds only are to be seen where thousands formerly existed. But notwithstanding this, there is enough and to spare for the sportsman's purposes, although not possibly for the skin-hunter, and such gluttons for slaughter who measure their success by the quantity of blood they spill.

But I do not write for these *wretches*—could I find a stronger parliamentary word I would use it—for is not the extinction of the bison of the prairies, and the wapiti deer of the foot-hills of the Rocky Mountains, due entirely to them and their kindred? Through all my world-wide experience, wherever you discover a pastoral population of mixed extraction, on one side of which is a strong suffusion of Dutch blood, you are certain to find a people who have little or no sympathy with the brute creation, a disregard to the pain they may subject it to, and an inherent love for the unlimited and exterminating slaughter of the beautiful creatures that have been placed by an Omnipotent Creator upon the face of the earth for man's use, not for his abuse. However, the Boers of the Cape in the outlying districts have not carried on their crusade against the *spring-bok* and *bless-bok* without suffering for their short-sighted policy. This is how they have reaped their just reward. They grudged the indigenous animals every blade of glass they ate, and therefore took from the squatter's sheep—so annihilated them. Now, the only grasses that were known to fatten stock do not indigenously grow in those parts. Why? may well be asked. The wild beasts brought its seed from the desert, and in their droppings sowed it broadcast over the *veldt*. But *trecking* away north into what the Boer so expressively calls the *hinterland*, antelopes, zebras, etc., become more numerous and less wild. If the country be rocky or hilly, you are almost certain to see the koodoo, with its magnificent corkscrew horns and harness-looking marked hide, an animal that weighs twice as much as does the red-deer of Scotland, and is infinitely more graceful in form and imposing in stature. On the same beat your ear may be startled by a sharp clatter, as if flint stones were being rapidly pounded against each other. It is caused by the abrupt retreat of some zebras, the true mountain species, and most markedly dissimilar from his relatives, the quagga and Burchell's zebra, who prefer for their *habitat* the flats and undulating grounds that margin the Kalihari desert. Stony lands the two last-mentioned detest; indeed, their feet are not formed for traversing it, as their hoofs are large and flat, with the frog much let down, while the true zebra's is cup-shaped, with the frog raised. The material of which the hoof of the dwellers on the plain is composed, is soft and capable of being dressed with a sharp knife ; that of the mountain animal is as hard as iron, a proof of how wise all-seeing Nature is in adapting her creatures to their respective *habitats*. Another beautiful creature to be found along this route, but more numerous on the edge of the desert, is the *h'ems bok* (*anglicè* gems buck). It is massive in form, generally about thirteen hands high, and of the softest fawn colour, interspersed with nearly equal proportions of dark iron grey and cream-colour. This charming animal's face is particularly attractive: with a near approach to black for a ground-work, a broad white blaze passes from its muzzle round each side of the eyes to the ear, while its head is decorated with two straight horns, frequently three and a half feet long, deeply corrugated at the base, but as smooth as needles and almost as sharp towards the tips. The *h'ems bok* has not unfrequently been known to impale the lion, when the carcases of both are found firmly attached to each other. Where-ever you go, duiker and stein-bok (about the size of roedeer) are to be found abundant. They worthily help to fill the pot, and stewed are far from being a bad concomitant in making up a satisfactory meal. Such game as I have described was daily seen or killed by myself or servants on my numerous journeys up country, but, so far, on this special occasion, although hourly looked for, not a giraffe had been sighted. William, my Griqua driver, consoled me with the information, "Wait till we get to Mahalapsi, certain to find *camilest* there, never passed it in my life without finding plenty there."

At length Mahalapsi was reached, after a most trying treck through the heaviest sand I know of in that part of the world. It was cruel work upon the bullocks, for, although there were eighteen of these patient animals in the yoke of each waggon, still their progress could scarcely have been faster than a mile an hour. The sand was well over the wheel felloes at all times, for my loads were heavy, and I regret to say that the powerful and loud-resounding whip had incessantly to be kept employed. The desired place (of *outspan*) at length was come to. It was a *vley* of a hundred or more acres, and fortunately, at the time I speak of, full of water, for heavy rains had lately fallen. The situation, although not strikingly beautiful, had its attraction when seen with a gorgeous rising sun, burnishing the water's surface with his golden rays. Around the *vley* were diminutive and gently sloping high grounds, covered with mapani brush, through which grew in sparsely scattered clumps—almost omnipresent in all African scenery—the variety of mimosa tree known as *Accasia giraffa*.

My position at this time was about one hundred and twenty miles south-east of Soochong, in Bamanwato, and on the direct road to the unproductive gold-fields of Tati.

As all had been more or less busy for the previous forty-eight hours, after a thorough good feed, I turned in for a few hours' sleep. Rest had been earned if ever it was, and I enjoyed the desired reward of my labour till the sun was nearly dipping the western horizon. On turning out, my eyes were greeted with what is ever a pleasant sight to the African hunter—viz., the return to camp of fat cattle, their paunches nearly bursting with the quantity of luxuriant pasture they had obtained on their new range. The horses also were equally fit, for they had been saved along the line of march for the work that was now contemplated. At that time my stud consisted of three nags, a dark strawberry roan, and a dark steel-grey, these colours are called by the Boers respectively red and blue skimmels. Both were good, sound, and fast beasts, that had cost me a lot of money, for they were "*salted.*" The third of my horses was what I call "a three-cornered brute." What he did not know was not worth knowing; but, as frequently happens with very clever men, he was a rum-'un to look at. Having had the misfortune to lose an eye in his youth, when ridden the beast carried his head over to one side, to look out for holes and obstructions. That solitary orb must have been a very good one, for although it had the most malicious, evil cast, it would have been impossible to ride its owner into any perilous place. This dun for such was his colour was not vicious; exactly the reverse: but he was gruesome to look upon, for he had a head like a fiddle, lop ears, and protruding hip bones, that you might have hung your hat upon. In pace this horse was a *trippler*, and about seven miles an hour might have been got out of him by ordinary means; although with an application of spurs or *jambock* double that distance would be accomplished without overtaxing his legs or "blowpipes." How this Rosinante was so thin was ever a mystery to me, for he had an insatiable appetite and an abundance of food to gratify it with, never was overworked, and in a general way "had a pretty good time."

Possibly this quadruped does not deserve so much space as I have awarded him, but he was such a character, and so incomprehensible in some of his ways, that he could well be considered a regular oddity, and I have a great weakness for eccentricities, whether they be among men, horses, or dogs.

The late George Wisbeach, one of the very best fellows that the world ever produced, had given me a warning about this *vley*. "Look out for your cattle and horses at Mahalapsi," said he, "for there are the cheekiest lot of lions about that water that you will find in the whole country."

However, the night was fine, with a grand moon, so the marauders did not molest me, although, from the restlessness of the bullocks and nags, I have no doubt but that these wise beasts winded their natural enemies.

The guinea-fowls, francolins, and Hottentot duck that frequented this water about sunset were something marvellous for numbers. Where the last-named come from, and how they assemble about a pond that has been so lately formed by the rains, is one of those incomprehensible things that has puzzled many wiser heads than mine. Is it sight, or scent, that brings these broad-bills to these evanescent splashes of water? I agree with Andersson, both on this point and in regard to the vultures, that to the first-mentioned sense is to be attributed these desultory visits. Sand grouse also streamed over the waggons in almost continuous flights, making direct for the water; even after night had set in I could hear their musical, plaintive call when it was too dark to distinguish the vocalists. But soon the jackals struck up their merry tittering yelps, now and then added to by the doleful, complaining call of the hyæna. Such a challenge—for so my dogs regarded it—brought every member of my pack from under the waggons, when each endeavoured to outrival his comrade in the volume of the angry threats that they hurled back at their antagonists. I have written it before, I cannot help writing it again, that there is a charm in such surroundings, that never fail to impress the lover of nature with ecstatic feelings of admiration for the beauties and fascinations of the earth as it exists, when uncontaminated by civilization and the extermination of the aboriginal brute creation that are certain to follow in the wake of colonization.

In these solitudes strange noises are to be heard the night through; some appear to emanate from creatures close at hand, others to orginate in far-distant space. The producers of these calls are generally the pretty little red-legged plover, the great crested toucan, or the black and white cuckoo, as well as different species of storks, all of which are nocturnal in habits, unless the weather be particularly stormy and dark. But there are many voices I do not know, it would take a lifetime residence in these parts to learn them all; but William the driver and his sable *cortége* can instruct me in all the mysteries of this invisible life that surrounds me, and do it without making the most trivial error.

My coffee had been just poured out, the time being a few minutes after sunrise, when a handsome, pleasant-featured native walked into camp with the air and grace of a true aristocrat. I called for a stool and invited him to be seated. This he did—not on the stool—with becoming dignity. William's eye caught mine; he understood my look, so soon had a "*beaker*" full of hot, strong, and very sweet coffee poured out for the stranger. It is surprising the love these aborigines have for this beverage; how they can have acquired it would be difficult to say, for none but a wealthy chief could afford to purchase it. A nice fat roasted rib of barren cow *hartebeest* was also handed the unknown: with the blade of his assegai he dexterously severed the meat from the bone, and save that he crammed his mouth full to an alarming extent, there was nothing to find fault with in his manner of conducting himself at his meal. Having satisfied the wants of the inward man, his tongue became loosened, and it was evident our good treatment disposed him to give us all information on hunting matters that we desired. William, after a time, broached the all-important subject, "Was there any '*camile*' in the neighbourhood?"

"A few; there had been plenty a few days since, but some Griqua hunters had driven them off. However, he had come across *spoor* that morning, and last night, not far from our camp."

As our visitor was willing to act as guide to the *pugs* he had seen for a few charges of powder, some caps, and a goodly piece of meat should game be killed, a bargain was at once concluded. All now was excitement, for horses required saddling, dogs tying up—a performance that they much resented—and instructions had to be issued for the maintenance of order and discipline during my absence.

My driver was to ride the dun horse, so he borrowed a spur from me, and provided himself with a *jambock*, while I selected the strawberry roan as my mount. Now Strawberry was a most enduring beast, fast as Cape horses are generally made, and a willing goer when once started; but here was the hitch—*when once started*. For a week or more he had had nothing to do, so I apprehended a little unpleasantness as soon as I was in the saddle. I was not disappointed, for the moment my nag felt my weight he went round the camp, bounding upwards without much forward progression, as many an observer may have seen deer do before breaking into their proper stride, if suddenly disturbed upon a hillside.

But buck-jumpers I have had some experience of, both in Australia and other parts of the earth, so I kept Mr. Strawberry's head up, and let him perform, which he sooner tired of than I did. How is it, I would ask the reader, that a confirmed buck-jumper is almost invariably a good horse?

However, we soon got started, amid a chorus of the most doleful howlings from the pack of dogs. Our guide proved himself a marvel of speed and endurance, keeping the horses at a pace of not less than six miles an hour. I never remember anywhere to have seen such numbers of small bucks; in less than an hour I counted over a score and a half, all of which kept their *forms* so close that they could have been killed with No. 5 shot.

At length the predicted spoor was reached. It was along a partially dry river bed, at one pool of which the game had evidently stopped to drink. Here there was a consultation between my driver and the stranger, when words ran high upon some points of *venerie*, which I was called upon to decide. This was really too absurd ; it was like two professors differing upon a Greek root, and calling in a servant to adjudicate between them. However, I dismounted, and certainly was rewarded for my trouble, for in the damp sand was displayed the most wonderful mass of pugs I think I ever previously or since have seen. I can only account for so many and different kinds of animals having visited this diminutive pool being caused by the presence at the large *vley* of my predecessors, the Griqua hunters. Many of these footprints I could easily distinguish, but the point in dispute was one of the latest impressions—whether it was made by a bush-pig or a wart-hog. The spoor of both are very similar, as may well be imagined, but the stranger pointed out the differences between the two that none but an expert could have noticed, the chief among which was that the former did not have its hoof as deeply cleft as the latter. This I could well imagine to be the case, as the bush-pig, as a rule, frequents high and therefore dry ground, while the wart-hog is never found far from where he can have his daily mud-bath. However, I deemed it best to plead ignorance, so as not to offend the *amour propre* of either disputant ; but this passive course did not settle matters, for the controversy was renewed during the day whenever opportunity offered, and even at the watch-fire long after I had retired to rest in the interior of my waggon. Natives can differ without getting angry or quarrelling, so no bad feelings were engendered between these two worthies ; can educated and Christian gentlemen always do likewise ?

The spoor of the giraffe, after leaving the water-course, led a long way by its margin, and, from the quantity of brush that it passed through, was most difficult to follow; but the guide was equal to his task, and although the perspiration ran down the channel of his back in a perfect stream, he never for a moment slackened his pace till within an hour of midday, when he suddenly halted, and pointed out the giraffes under some mimosa trees.

The nature of the surface of the ground between me and the game was not quite as desirable for riding as could be wished, for in places the irregular outlines of *dongas* and dry watercourses could be made out, all trending to the original *spruit*, whose route we had so long followed. As it is absolutely necessary, in galloping down giraffe, to make your horse go his very best pace from the start, and as nothing takes more out of your mount than dropping into and clambering out of such impediments, as mentioned, when riding at speed, I resolved to retrace my steps again and seek the shelter of the partially dry tributary of Mahalapsi *vley*, which was well sunk in the adjoining *champaign*. My device answered admirably till we had gained what I imagined must have been quite one hundred yards upon the giraffes' position, when a halt was called, and William and self dismounted to reconnoitre, leaving the nags in charge of the guide. To the inexpressible surprise of myself and servant, the game was gone, and yet from the nature of the country there could scarcely be an indentation in the terrain where animals of such lofty stature could conceal themselves. We looked blank enough at one another for some minutes, I assure the reader, when a sound of patter, patter, patter, caught our ears in the direction from whence we had come. So turning to see, within thirty yards were seven Burchell zebras, and three vilde-beasts, going what might be called up wind if there had been any breeze, as fast as their legs could carry them. In front of this *coterie* were some *hartebeests*, before them some springboks and ostriches, the whole led by what I will designate our giraffes, now, at least, three hundred yards away, the lengthened procession being whipped in by four Griquas, riding as niggers generally do, all arms and legs, and to be found anywhere between their horses' cruppers and their ears. Still, marvellous as it may appear, they get rapidly over the ground, and very seldom come to grief. No more convincing proof than this sight was wanting to inform us that no time was to be lost if we wished to participate in the chase, so simultaneously we quitted our shelter and made a rush for our mounts. Fortunately for me I had taken up two holes in my girth leathers when I dismounted; not so William, with the usual carelessness of a native, he had procrastinated this important duty, so his saddle only retained its place by balance.

I had quite enough to do to attend to my own affairs, but that did not prevent me seeing, as I rode up the side of the watercourse, my servant on his back between his horse's legs, and the "pig-skin" reversed, embracing his steed's belly. A ludicrous sight when you have time to admire it, truly, but that was denied me, although I gave one or two snorts of satisfaction when I thought how my driver's pride would suffer from his catastrophe.

I had no fear but that I could outpace the Griquas, for their horses possessed neither the quality nor condition of mine, still the Basuto ponies that they usually bestride are wonderfully quick and surefooted in passing over irregular and rocky ground. Fourteen hands is about the height of these *multum in parvos*, but they have the barrels of dray-horses. As a rule they are not pretty, but they can live upon anything, and stand with impunity all the variations of climate that can be experienced between two thousand and five thousand feet above sea level.

The giraffes had a start of quite four hundred yards when I settled myself down to ride, with the Griquas nearly a hundred yards in front of me. My *skimmel* nag got over space beautifully, although he was no daisy-cutter—indeed, a horse that galloped close to the ground would be little use here—for the sight of his species in front tended to increase his ardour and spirit of emulation. No need of "persuaders" now. All I had to do was to shove my feet home in the irons, sit down well in my saddle, keep my hands low, and let the horse, comparatively speaking, choose his own ground, for meer cat's and ant-bear's holes were numerous; but an up-country African horse is so familiar with them, as to know their danger and the treacherous nature of the soil in their immediate vicinity. I was commencing to get placed well in the hunt, when a bush-pig—Boer, Bosh-varke—suddenly disturbed from his noon-tide siesta, joined the last of the retreating game. He was a splendid beast, over forty inches at the shoulders, and with tassels on the tips of his ears, that would well have served an artist in priming before laying on colour. If I had possessed a spear then, I would have let the giraffes go to the deuce; but to do a hog to death in a rideable country with any other weapon—since my residence in India—has ever appeared to me as grievous a sin as shooting a fox in a hunting county. However, Master Piggy did me a good turn; he took a dry earth crack at a flying leap, which informed me of its existence, and that it was negotiable. I doubt, however, if this current belief is always correct, for it has led me into difficulties on more than one occasion.

The Griqua hunters were now on either side, and most unfairly I looked foward to their course being arrested by this jump, but in that I was mistaken, for all got over it a moment or two before I did, in spite of their slack and wobbling riding, and an evident attempt to preserve their balance by hanging on to their reins.

What a shock such a sight as this would be to some of those "cracks" who hunt in the "shires." For a moment, I confess, their success I did not like, but this feeling arose from innate selfishness, want of regard for others, and a desire to show off. Soon after this I was getting well away from my competitors, the greater portion of the game between me and the object of my pursuit had turned off to the left or right, and I was commencing to feel that I was getting within measurable distance of becoming assured of a kill, when, to my surprise, I observed the gallant William cutting into the run from an oblique direction. This he had been enabled to do from the chase having deviated from east to north. As usual he was riding as loosely as is the habit of his kindred, but his mount had stamina, for it was well fed; moreover, it had a hard taskmaster on its back, who did not spare punishment.

Soon the skirter was in my wake, and, with an amount of consideration that did him unqualified credit, permitted me to show him the way. This did not fail to make me angry, for I can well remember muttering some reprehensible language to the effect that, if I broke my neck or simply got a spill, he would precious well take care to steer clear of the dangerous place that had caused the accident. After all, now, in reason, what could I have better desired? If William had raced me for a place, and beaten me in his effort, I would have well anathematized him for his impudence and condemned him to perpetual imprisonment in a certain hot region we occasionally read of, and not unfrequently hear preached about. Sportsmen are pretty generally all tarred over with the same brush—and I am as well daubed over as the others—in our desire to distinguish ourselves, not caring a jot whom we sacrifice to accomplish our purpose.

By this time I was nearly alongside of a splendid cow with a calf at her heels. The youngster kept its place so close to the parent's hind quarters that it looked wonderfully strange how it could select a footing for each stride, this difficulty was further increased by the dam's heavy tasselled tail switching around, with almost the velocity of the fly-wheel of a steam engine. An observer would also have thought it impossible that the little one could avoid having its eyes knocked out, for this tuft is composed of hair as long as salmon gut, and five or six times its thickness ; but no such mishap took place, or possibly ever does, and the calf unflinchingly and perseveringly held its place. I had just resolved to push up alongside the nigh flank of the old one, and give her a bullet at short range, when the breathing of my horse told me very distinctly that his course was about run ; nor was it a wonder, considering that my nag had carried me—fourteen stone good, including saddle—at his best pace nearly a mile and a half over anything but smooth galloping. Gently I felt my mount's flanks with my spurs, but there was no response made to improve my position. So, as the game indicated no sign of fatigue, I determined to sacrifice the youngster, and, taking a steadying pull of the reins with my left hand, with my right I nearly shoved the barrels of my rifle into its ribs, and pulled the trigger. In a moment there ensued to the unfortunate a shambling of legs, a lurch forward, followed by an almost immediate downfall. This was so unexpectedly sudden, that my blown horse only saved himself from a fall over the prostrate body by a tremendous exertion. Not so fortunate was my driver on the one-eyed nag, and the partially tightened girths to his saddle, for the first went spreadeagle fashion into space, while his quadruped took some minutes to consider whether remaining prostrate on the ground or standing on his legs was the more desirable position to assume.

The spill which my servant had sustained would have had serious consequences to a white man ; not so to him, for he rose smiling, with an abundant adhesion of earth sticking to his wool and face. He got well chaffed by his countrymen, but took it with the usual good temper of a black man. The hunt for that occasion was now finished, all the horses had had more than enough, while the game continued sailing away, at the same steady even gait, as if they had just been started, instead of having done nearly two miles at their best pace. Leaving William, the guide, and some of the Griquas to attend to the cutting up and transportation of the meat to camp, with two of the strangers I started for a survey of the country. These people are generally a very civil and obliging lot, excellent hunters, but not often good shots. Why, I cannot say, unless it be their fear or dread of recoil. As they invariably overload their guns, this is quite possible. Kama, chief of the Bamanwato people, although a good all-round sportsman, I never could persuade to fire one of my elephant guns. The Griquas are a bastard race, generally a cross between the Boer frontier farmers and native women. Their besetting vice is drunkenness. To abstain from spirits when obtainable appears to them a moral impossibility. Yet they have produced some remarkable men, persons who, if they had existed in Europe, would have left a great reputation after them, both as soldiers and patriots. Africaneer, Waterboer, and Adam Kock,will long be remembered by their race, ay, and by colonists.

The surroundings had been so much harrowed by our chase that it was some time before we found game, and then it was in a perfectly new section of the country, separated from where we had hunted by a wide ridge of undulating land. Here was situated a *vley* of about forty or fifty acres in extent, and encompassed by an abundant growth of most verdant grass. This sequestered spot was fairly swarming with *springbok veldebeest* and Burchell's zebras, among which moved, with slow, measured stride, a family party of ostriches, in deportment and shape looking not unlike exaggerated barn-door fowls. A Wimbledon marksman would experience no difficulty in hitting so large an object as one of these birds at six or seven hundred yards, so I had a try, but found that I had undercalculated the distance—a very common error with Europeans in South Africa—so made a very glaring miss. A second shot I fired, but they were then in motion; the range was correct enough this time, still I went wide of the mark. As a cock ostrich in full feather is worth quite *70l.* sterling, the experiment was worth trying. Within a day's *treck* of Mahalapsi, a friend of mine, at the time returning from an unsuccessful hunt, and, as a natural consequence, fearfully hard up—viewed some of these birds in the open, and quite eleven hundred yards from the trail. This gentleman was a notoriously bad shot, but that did not deter him from firing. To his infinite surprise he knocked over a splendid cock, and, more remarkable still, it was not the one he fired at. The little cherub that sits up aloft is usually accredited with taking care of poor Jack. I feel convinced that he does so of Scotsmen, for to no other nationality would such luck have fallen. Sandy —— is an enormously rich man now, and well does he deserve the good things that Providence has showered upon him, for he is unrivalled in his locality for hospitality and generosity. He has often laughingly remarked to me, "That shot was the making of me."

I may as well remark here that there are two species of ostrich in South Africa, and that both are quite distinct from the North African bird. They are extremely attached to their young, which the following story, told by the great hunter and naturalist, Charles John Andersson, abundantly proves:—

"The moment that the parent birds became aware of our intention (to capture some chicks) they set off at full speed, the female leading the way, the young following in her wake, and the cock, though at some little distance, bringing up the rear of the family party. It was very touching to observe the anxiety the old birds evinced for the safety of their progeny. Finding that we were quickly gaining upon them, the male at once slackened his pace and diverged somewhat from his course, but seeing that we were not to be diverted from our purpose, he again increased his speed, and with wings drooping so as almost to touch the ground, he hovered round us, now in wide circles, and then decreasing their circumference till he came almost within pistol-shot, when he abruptly threw himself upon the ground, and struggled desperately to regain his legs, like a bird that had been badly wounded; having previously fired at him, I really thought he was disabled, and made quickly towards him; but this was only a ruse on his part, for on my nearer approach he slowly rose and began to run in an opposite direction to that of the female, who by this time was considerably ahead with her charge."

Who that is partial to shooting or fishing has not witnessed our wild duck perform exactly in the same way when engaged in the duties of maternity, and suddenly disturbed in rush-bound haunt. Here we have two birds essentially dissimilar in every respect, with habitats as far apart as it is possible for them to be, practising exactly the same *ruse* for the protection of their young.

Is this instinct or intellect? it must be one or the other, but how very difficult it is to decide which! One thing we do know, their instructor is the same great teacher who created the world.

It was a grand sight to see this collection of the most beautiful specimens of animal life wheel round us to get the wind, and then start in one long, unbroken line for new pastures. The bounds that the springbok make, and from which it no doubt derives its name, are assuredly marvellous, how high they go is difficult to say—possibly eight or nine feet—but their bounds are always full of grace, and that is set off to additional advantage by its beautiful fawn-coloured coat, abundantly interspersed with the purest milk-white markings. The oribi is also a famous jumper, but its favourite haunts are more towards the ocean-girt margin of this rich and grand continent.

While I was admiring this seldom witnessed sight, one of the Griquas disturbed my reverie by exclaiming that he had seen a lion down in the low land which the game had just deserted, far from an unlikely circumstance, for the two necessaries of his majesty's life were near at hand, viz., food and water, both to be obtained without exertion. So we had a helter-skelter gallop to where the big cat had last been observed, but our search was unavailing, although I have no doubt the brute was in our immediate vicinity, from the great caution and evident alarm that our horses displayed when pushed into the brush from the open country.

These freebooters have an extraordinary gift of secreting themselves, even in situations where such would be deemed impossible. However, if I had had my dogs with me, we should have made it warm for the gentleman. An instance was told me by a countryman, who had gone up into Zoutspansberg with the express desire of shooting a lion, as these animals were reported numerous in that province of the Transvaal. He found all kinds of game abundant except the species he sought for, so he informed his Boer host, after a residence of some weeks, that he did not believe there was a single specimen of the breed in the country. Mynheer responded in the usual phlegmatic way of his countrymen : " You tak my Bosheman herd with you to-morrow, he'll show you plenty *leuws*." This my friend did, and to his unutterable surprise, had no less than four lions pointed out to him by the keen-eyed native in the course of the day.

The Griqua was unquestionably right, he had seen the lion, for we found its fresh spoor, and not improbably while we were searching for it, it was coolly taking stock of us, and possibly imagining what a nice meal one of our horses would afford it, for horse flesh or zebra are its favourite diet.

I returned to my waggons by way of the Griqua camp, which was much closer to my domicile than I had anticipated. It was scarcely a pleasant sight to look upon, being entirely without order and cleanliness. A cluster of about a dozen whitey-brown children amusing themselves with the bones of various kinds of game, was the first thing to catch my attention. These brats were dressed in the primitive manner of our great progenitors, or in other words, their raiment was conspicuous by its absence. Many of the representatives of this embryo population were not bad-looking, or even unattractive, but for their repulsive filthiness. This would not have been so conspicuous on a black skin, but a coffee and milk-coloured complexion did not hide this neglect. Like black children, the stomachs of these half-breeds appear abnormally large. I should imagine this hideous deformity to result from the irregularity of their meals ; eating to repletion one day and starving the next. Notwithstanding these disadvantages, however, they grow up into well proportioned men and women ; indeed, I have seen many of the latter quite comely. The celebrated traveller, Sir Cornewall Harris, of the Bombay Engineer Force, who, about half a century ago, succeeded in penetrating almost as far north as my present position, remarks this, and gives, in one of his fascinating sketches, a likeness of a Griqua belle, who, with the requisite adornments demanded by fashion, would have passed muster in the majority of ball-rooms. Scolding women, rickety, unpainted waggons, and uncared-for and half-starved-looking dogs, made up the rest of the details of the *tout ensemble* of these hunters' *ménage*.

On gaining my own camp I found that the meat had arrived, so cooking in all stages was progressing; thus universal good nature, even hilarity, prevailed, fresh meat acting upon the natives much as ardent spirits do upon the children of civilization. It is almost impossible of belief how much of it the natives can stow away at a sitting.

Calf giraffe is excellent and nutritious food, so is fat cow, but save me from having to feed upon old bull, for it requires an immense amount of mastication, and is redolent of a flavour not unlike the extract of musk. Just before sunset I took my shot-gun and visited a bay which the greater number of the wild duck seemed to select the previous night for their feeding or resting place. Tall grass and taller rushes margined it; but for this I should very soon have made a heavy bag, as it enabled the cripples to escape, and often hid birds that had been killed outright. Even under these disadvantages I secured six couple. They belonged to the species known as the yellow-billed duck (*Canas flavirostris*), which is far from uncommon in the "old colony," as I have frequently shot it south of the Orange river. That it may be recognized by future sportsmen, I will mention its most marked peculiarities. These are an oblong brown patch on the ridge of the upper mandible, the nails being the same colour, greater part of bill gamboge-yellow, while the iris is brown.

A most ludicrous scare took place in camp that night, that did not redound much to the credit or pluck of any of the *dramatis personæ* engaged in it. I had turned in early, and, as the night was warm, reclined upon my *cartel* (suspended bed-frame), with no other garments on than my shirt and nightcap. My lamp was furnishing an unusually brilliant light, and I was enjoying with rare gusto the adventures of Becky Sharp in Brussels at the time when the battle of Waterloo was being fought. My people were chatting round the camp-fire in the utmost harmony. A few minutes before, I thought that I heard the crack of a waggon-whip in the distance; now there was no room for doubt, for it was distinctly to be recognized much closer. "Trader or hunters," thought I, "so no necessity for inconveniencing myself." Soon again, "Slash, slash" went the whip, and with the reports came to my ears a volley of profane language. In an instant after this was answered by yells from all my people, and the angry barking of every dog. In my pristine state of *negligé*, with the exception of having shoved my feet into slippers, I sprang out. Of course I was armed, for in this land one never knows what necessity may occur, at any moment, for the use of a weapon. Scarcely had I reached the ground, when I became aware that almost all my people were perched upon, or hanging on to the waggons. But what had caused the scare? A bush-pig, disturbed by the approaching vehicle, had rushed into our camp, when, becoming mobbed by the dogs, the infuriated beast was charging at everything that attracted its attention. Thus I was singled out as the object of the wrath of the brute, so with one foot on the hub of a wheel, and the left hand upon the back rail, I ascended my conveyance's side faster than ever I did before. Until perched aloft, where I must have looked and certainly felt anything but picturesque and good-tempered, I became conscious that the new arrivals had come up, and were within ten or twelve yards of my abiding place.

Of course, my natural surmises led me to believe that the newly-arrived waggons were the property of traders, by whom they would be accompanied, so I resolved that if they observed me in such an ignominious position, it should not be as acting the part of a passive spectator of the exciting scene that was going on beneath me. Thus I tried to shoot, but my footing was so uncertain, and my hold of the tilt so precarious, that I could not take aim at the pig with any certainty of success, for the brute was jinking and charging, first to the right and then to the left, within an area of a few feet, and that area not a yard and a half from my legs. Why the wrathful beast did not go further, or cut the camp altogether, was for the very good reason that it could not, being mobbed on all sides by over twenty dogs, several of whom had a firm hold of the intruder. The boar had used his tusks well, for by the light afforded by moon and camp fire I could distinguish several hounds that were already *hors de combat.* The worst of such *rencontres* is that it is always the best dogs that come to grief, and I by no means desired to add to the list of the wounded, or possibly killed, by missing the "bosch vaark" and knocking over a dog. Piggy, from some cause or other, made an extra effort and succeeded in throwing off many of his assailants—remember that these were all more or less greyhounds, and, therefore, not holders like bulldogs—and taking a hind wheel as a trifling obstacle to his progress, charged at it, but he had miscalculated the opposition that he had to encounter. The wheel was a well-built one—how could it be otherwise when it was constructed by Weddherbairn of Grahamstown? So the spokes being firmly morticed in both nave and felloes, and further made of well-seasoned wood, refused to yield, so that the now mad beast got himself pinioned. His power was terrific, every struggle caused the heavily-loaded waggon to tremble, and what between him on one side, and the horses, who were tied to the other, pulling back upon their head-stalls, for a moment or two I had my doubts whether the conveyance would not be turned over on its side. Of course, if the pig had lowered his head, he would easily have got it out of Coventry, but this was exactly what one of his species would not do, and the result was that the gallant beast had got himself in a position that made him quite defenceless. The natives were not slow to avail themselves of such an advantage, and their assegais, taken from the waggon's side, where they are usually tied when travelling, soon accomplished what the dogs had failed to perform.

In the meantime I had been skipping about, *sans culotte*, to retain my position for the short time that I was so situated, long as it may have taken me to narrate the details.

At the moment that the poor beast was rendered *hors de combat*, I heard a shriek. It was a woman's, evidently, and a white woman's, too. I raised my head to discover who produced the sound, and was just in time to observe a very portly lady disappearing over the front waggon *kist* into the recesses of the newly-arrived "ship of the desert." I am a modest man, and naturally desire only to be seen by the fair sex under advantageous circumstances, so I felt quite the reverse of pleased at this most unbecoming introduction. Without delay I hastened to dress and advance to the habitation of the new comer to offer her what hospitality I had at my disposal, and ask pardon for my incomplete costume, but my overtures were received with *hauteur*, even with reproach. I protested in the most fluent and eloquent language that I could command, that my fault was unintentional, that it could not for a moment have been premeditated, etc., but all the answers that I could get to such explanations, simply resulted in that the fair one would not have minded if it had been a black man—that she was accustomed to see, but "a white man, oh! oh! oh! it was too bad, too bad," and sobs could be heard to follow after the above speech.

At length I retired, discomfited and grieved, and thought over the whole affair; the conclusion I came to was that a naked black man must be eminently more attractive—or less repulsive—than a partially naked white one.

As I write this, it recalls to me a remark, made in my hearing by a lady of standing in Natal, who long had been resident in that colony. She was surrounded by a number of lady passengers as the ship took up her position outside the bar off Point Durban. A surf-boat, loaded with nude natives, came alongside to assist in discharging cargo. The new arrivals from England were naturally shocked, and would doubtless have fled to the sanctuary of their cabins, when the old *habitué* exclaimed, in assuring terms, "Don't go, don't go, dears; that's nothing at all when you are used to it."

The fair unrecognized *trecked* at daybreak next morning, but not before William had learned who she was, and the object of her journey through this wide and sparsely-inhabited country. So to satisfy curiosity I will state she was the young Boer wife of an English trader, who (the *vrouw*) was alike remarkable for the solidity and proportions of her charms as for the extent of her purse. With all these attractions she failed to be able to keep her swain at home, however—some, in fact, were malicious enough to say that he had other attractions of a different colour in a distant Matabele kraal. Of course, this was a *canard* invented by some defeated rival for the fair one's hand, so she spent her money and time *trecking* about the land in search of her reported recusant spouse.

What between the attendants upon the grass widow, the Griquas, and some wandering bush people who had made their appearance, Mahalapsi, independent of its numerous attractions, was not now a desirable hunting centre for obtaining giraffes.

The stranger who had joined us received information from some of his own tribe (Massara), who were on their way to Bamanwato, with feathers and ivory, their annual subsidy to their chief, for the great Kama was a slave owner, that *camile* were numerous at Matloutsi river, and in the *velt* to the southward and eastward of it, that good rains had fallen, so that water would be found abundant everywhere, and, as a sequence, fresh grass for the oxen plentiful. Thus that evening I broke up camp, so as to get through the early part of our *treck* in the cool of the night, for the first ten or twelve miles are remarkably heavy sand, after which, to Gowkive river, a favourite outspanning place, the travelling is passably good.

The whole distance might be roughly estimated at thirty miles, which we got over with four *outspans* of about three hours each, so that the journey took about thirty-six hours in all. When water is scarce this part of the journey has to be hurried through, as many of the Tati miners' and traders' bullocks have known to their cost. Some portion of this journey, especially the last half, is very pretty indeed, being well covered with trees and bush. The lions of the vicinity had, however, a very wide-known notoriety for their daring and ferocity. This, doubtless, has been caused through the banks of the Gowkive having frequently been the scene of battles between the hostile tribes of Bamanwato and Matabele Land. Dead and wounded natives familiarize the wild animals with the impotency of men to resist them, and, as in many other cases, familiarity leads to contempt. This is not only noticeable among the nobler species of the *feræ naturæ*, but even among the foul-feeding and generally cowardly hyænas, for here the large spotted variety does not hesitate to carry off children, but even to attack, in open daylight, mature women and men, particularly if they are suffering from sickness and overtaxed strength. I saw an example of the bloodthirstiness of these marauders to-day. A bushman that we encountered on our treck had lost nearly the entire part of one of his cheeks, laying bare the bone and grinding teeth of his left jaw, leaving a most unsightly scar. I had the curiosity to ask how the disaster occurred, and was informed that the unfortunate was returning to his home from the Diamond fields, when he had the bad luck to "stake" one of his feet, so was unable to keep up with his companions. Having made a fire and put up a temporary shelter, he fell asleep, when the marauder stole upon him during the night, and seized him by the cheek, and tore it off before the victim had time afforded him to make resistance. However, we were favoured with a quiet night—a good moon one portion of it, and starlight the other—so we were vouchsafed no adventures, except the loss of a dog, and, as usual, one of the pluckiest I possessed. The poor beast—although I had purchased him from a native, was very much attached to me—was unfortunately white, and to that I in no small degree attributed his misfortune. Take my advice, reader, if you propose wandering in the wilds of South Africa, if it be possible to avoid it, never take with you a white horse or dog, or you will be certain to have occasion to rue it. I suppose white is more conspicuous at night than coloured would be, so sooner attracts the attention of predatory carnivorous animals.

The dog in question was doubtless seized by a leopard, for a protracted struggle ensued before silence proclaimed that death had taken place. The scene of the tragedy was nearly two hundred yards from the trail, so we could not render assistance until it was too late. The Massara guide discovered spoor that told truthfully the tale to what species was due our deprivation. We had just passed three *copjes*—very conspicuous landmarks—to the right or south of our course, when William pointed me out an enormous bush *pauw*. It was some distance from the "track," so when we got abreast of the bird, I dropped behind the waggons and secreted myself in the bushes which margined our trail. The game seemed very interested in our long cavalcade, watching it with marked attention, so little surmising that an enemy was left behind. Thus, without difficulty, I got within one hundred and twenty yards of my quarry, when a convenient ant-hill presenting itself, over it I got a good support for my rifle, and made a successful shot. It was a splendid specimen, and worthy of any trouble to preserve its plumage and skin, which I did. I should imagine that it weighed over fifty pounds. Larger specimens are to be obtained occasionally, even reaching one-third more than my prize. On the wing their flight looks very laboured, yet it is swift. They are partially migratory, and at one time were far from scarce in Griqua Land West, the Orange Free State, and Transvaal. A young one, when cooked slowly, and well basted, and, when possible, stuffed as turkeys are usually treated, makes an admirable dish, but an old one is apt to be very strong and tough as india-rubber. When we were within measurable distance of the river Limpopo and therefore of our *outspan*, the *voorlooper* (the boy who leads the yoked cattle) caught a tortoise of unusual size. The meat of this creature is possibly the most delicate supplied by this region of country, so I appropriated it. Its shell had at the sides been well scratched, probably by a hyæna, but even their terrible jaws cannot do more injury. From any living creature but man, these harmless things are safe, but the lords of creation submit it to a fearful death, so barbarous that it can only be contemplated with a shudder. It is thus performed: Having placed the victim on its back in a hollow excavated in the ground, a fire is made around and over it, and so roasted alive. After all, the natives that perform this deed of barbarity are no worse than we educated Christians, who place lobsters in a cauldron of cold water and then boil them. The agonies that both the unfortunates suffer, I should imagine, must be very similar, yet I fear that there are very few of our delicately-nurtured, refined belles of society, would refrain from eating a lobster salad on this account. It is sometimes wholesome to have these truisms pointed out, so that those who live in glass-houses should not throw stones.

When outspanning there was a grand hulla-bulloo among my people. Seven giraffes, evidently ignorant of our vicinity, came suddenly out of the river bed and went off to the southward at their very best pace. Having only a small-bore rifle in my hands I desisted from firing. As usual, when wanted, the horses were some distance behind, under their guardians. This was not the people's fault, for I had instructed them not to hurry, so that my beasts might fill themselves upon the succulent grasses that had sprung up since the late rains.

Here I met a trader (an old acquaintance), from Lobengulo's country, going south with valuable loads of feather and ivory. He had seen several troops of giraffes within the last two days, as well as a fair show of other game. He had complained much of the lions, and not without reason, for they had killed his only horse in broad daylight, and close to his waggons. Hunting was not his speciality, as will be seen from the following. When the alarm of the catastrophe was given, rifle in hand, and accompanied by some of his people, he hurried to the place where his beast had been pulled down. To his surprise, instead of seeing one lion, he found five, and as he remarked, "the odds were rather against me, and I could not bring the horse to life, so I thought it more prudent to go back, and get out of the neighbourhood as soon as possible." Just so, the course he took was the most prudent, and anyone who had seen his rifle would have said the same. It was a Liege-built piece, looked as if it had been made in the year one, with both locks so defective and weak that it must always have been a matter of considerable doubt whether their main-springs possessed power to explode a cap. Fancy travelling in this country with only such a specimen of firearms for your protection; it verily says much for the honesty and peacefulness of the natives. This man was reported to be wealthy. I trust he will not some day discover, to his cost, that to be penny wise is pound foolish.

Lions were heard all that night; possibly they were those that despoiled my friend; however, they did not pay me a visit. When there is plenty of water lying on the veldt, lions move about a great deal, as does the other game; but when water is scarce they attach themselves to a pit or vley, in the vicinity of which they can almost at any time be found.

The reader may have possibly observed that I have alluded to game running up wind. This instinct is one of those grand provisions of nature, instilled into them (the wild animals) by an extraordinary controlling influence, that takes upon itself to dictate the means that lessen the hazards of the life that they are submitted to. Hence, running up wind tells the weaker creatures where danger (by the power of scent) is to be apprehended, and thus avoided. What I have just said is condensed into a few words, yet a lecture of hours might be delivered upon the subject, and still something further left to say. The benefit that the inferior order of animals derive from this great provision is almost beyond comprehension.

Notwithstanding this extraordinary gift of sagacity, many giraffes, in spite of their great height, and therefore ability to see objects at a great distance, fall victims to the *carnivora*—not only to lions, but also to panthers or leopards. In the latter instance the spotted cat, after a successful stalk, makes good his hold by the aid of tooth and claw on the victim's back, somewhere in the vicinity of the withers, and if the assailant be a small animal, the struggle is long protracted before the *denouement* is accomplished.

A hunter of great experience in tropical South Africa—a son of one of our well-known general officers of the last decade—narrated the following episode to me, the circumstances of which were borne out both by the word of his followers and his companion.

He was in search of giraffes on the Botletle river, a district of country passed when *en route* to the great Mababee veldt. At length he and his chum spied a family party of the desired game, but not before their presence became known to the vigilant quarry.

Their horses were too much out of condition, and the ground too rough, to make successful running with an indifferent start, so they pretended not to see the beasts; at the same time gaining as much ground to their flank as would place them in a better position with regard to the wind. Their movements were closely watched by the timid creatures, which, evidently satisfied as to the safety of their stand, or that no hostile intentions were entertained towards them, halted close together, and gratified their curiosity by gazing at the intruders. To the astonishment of the hunters, the family party in an instant broke up, and, with no apparent reason, took to most precipitate flight. The brush had become thinner, the ground more even on the surface, so an immediate pursuit was instituted. The pace was very severe, but the horsemen had the best of it, so that the distance between pursuers and pursued became much lessened. One thing struck both the sportsmen as strange; instead of the rear being brought up, as is usual, by the old bull, that post of honour was occupied by a cow, who apparently laboured considerably in her efforts to retain her place. No suspicion had so far occurred to the hunters of what was the matter with the poor beast. Possibly they had enough to do to keep their horses in hand, and look out for the omnipresent ant-bear holes, to take particular notice of the game so as to note that the cow in question carried a rider; but the similarity in the colour of both animals might well prevent this being observed. However, the pace was good and the distance covered upwards of four miles, when, to the surprise of the horsemen, without a shot being fired, the rear giraffe came down all of a heap. Here was a mystery, but it was soon solved on reaching the prostrate beast, for beside it was a leopard, apparently ignorant of the vicinity of enemies, still gnawing further and further into its victim's neck. I am happy to add that that was the last ride Master Spots ever had an opportunity of enjoying.

The late lamented George Wisbeach, who spent upwards of twenty-five years in trading between the frontiers of civilization and the Zambesi, met me on one occasion at Tchakani vley. He was bound for the station of Bamanwato, which I had just left. He had had a most successful trip, I anticipated the same, although our objects were quite different. One thing, however, I possessed, which he had not, in spite of the wealth that was stowed away in his numerous waggons, and what does the reader imagine it was? Well! nothing less than a supply of grog, a portion of which I was well supplied with, particularly old Jamaica rum. Now dear old George had a *penchant* for this identical spirit, so, as water was abundant, and the grass in the vicinity plentiful and sweet, he decided to lay over for a couple of days. Numerous were the shikar yarns that were told during that halt, but one is so *apropos* to the subject on which I am writing, that I will narrate it here.

One day, when out shooting in the neighbourhood of Pablamatinka, he found some giraffes in *veldt*, well suited for stalking purposes. Such a chance was not to be lost of obtaining meat, for his retinue of servants was always large; so, after exercising the usual amount of creeping and dodging, lying still and making progress when he thought that he was unobserved, he arrived within range of the *camiles* (Boer for giraffes; this appellation is almost in universal use throughout the colony). Singling out the finest cow, he fired at her, his weapon being a single barrel converted Sneider, Government pattern. This is not exactly the weapon to be selected for killing such mammoth game, for, although its penetration is all that can be desired, it does not cause sufficient shock to the system, to produce immediate results, unless, of course, the bullet penetrates the heart or head. However, my friend's shot brought the giraffe to her knees, after which she and her *confrères* at once started to place a safe distance between themselves and the dangerous locality.

But the poor stricken animal did not go far before encountering further difficulties. It might have been the smell of the blood, possibly it was the result of a chance combination of circumstances—who can say? for a large lioness, with a rush of several yards, followed by a prodigious spring, precipitated herself upon the withers of the wounded beast, and tried with tremendous efforts to drag her to the ground. Retard, but not stop, the giraffe's progress the assailant was able to do, but not more, and several times it looked as if she would break free, but the hold that the lioness had secured was too firm for such to take place. While this struggle lasted, first one hind foot and then another would be brought into use, and the fearful wounds thus inflicted by their claws were ample proof of the extraordinary power possessed by the limbs of these largest and heaviest representatives of the cat family. But the battle, that had heretofore waged with almost doubtful results, was brought to a rapid conclusion, for a powerful old lion, with another lady, most unexpectedly appeared upon the scene. "Where they had come from," the narrator said, "goodness only knows, for I had not observed them before, and the ground looked far too bare to secrete a pair of such large brutes; in fact, it appeared almost as if they had been shot up from the bowels of the earth." But so it is; it is marvellous how the largest *carnivora* can secrete themselves. With such odds against the victim, the issue of the assault was not long doubtful. The old mannikin hurled himself upon the giraffe's rump, while the lady that had last put in an appearance, by a gigantic spring, got both her paws around the towering neck and her powerful teeth buried in it. Still the unfortunate creature did not resign life without a final effort, made by a succession of the most extraordinary buck jumps, which appeared utterly impossible to accomplish, even if not handicapped by the conjoined efforts of three mature lions. Such herculean exertions could not be protracted for an indefinite period, so slowly but surely they became reduced, till at length the towering form staggered, and ultimately came down with a crash that almost made the earth tremble. Such was my friend's story, as I entered it in my diary an hour or two after it was told to me; several times since I have heard him tell it, and in no particular did the description vary from the first narration. However, I should tell the *finale*. The old male he killed with one shot, and severely wounded one of his consorts with the next, the remaining lady, then took herself off. The next day the maimed animal was hunted up, showed fight, and only succumbed after receiving five bullets, having previously severely mauled several of the natives. Such a *fracas* as the above was indeed a treat to witness, and its *finale* to participate in. I do not say this from any spirit of bloodthirstiness, quite the reverse, but from the knowledge that without seeing such episodes of wild life, a thorough insight into the habits of the brute creation would be impossible. To-day I witnessed one of those extraordinary circumstances in animated nature that no one can account for, viz., a migration of those curious and repulsive creatures known as "millepedes." These must not be confounded with centipedes, for they are totally different insects; as their name denotes, they are supposed to have a thousand legs, while the other are reported to have only one hundred; a pretty good supply, even if there should be employed a little exaggeration in the above numbers. In the course of an hour several hundreds crossed the trail made by my waggons, and all travelled almost exactly in the spoor of their predecessors. They varied much in size, some being quite fifteen inches long and as thick as my wrist. If impeded in their course, or touched roughly, they rolled themselves up, with their legs carefully folded inside the coils, thus presenting only their hard, shell-like backs to the enemy. All appeared to be moulting, or about to do so, if such a term can be employed when the shell is cast in place of feathers. I believe that they are perfectly harmless, so, destitute of poison. This statement I took the natives' word for, as I have no taste for handling, even touching, such hideous-looking creatures. As to the cause of these animals' migration I am quite in the dark, nor could I ever find anyone that could give me information on the subject; however, it is the more remarkable when we consider how very low a position they occupy in the scale of animation.

Such are the numbers of natives on this trail, all on their way to the Diamond fields, that the game encountered appears restless and suspicious, therefore difficult of approach, so I have resolved not to hunt till after the Mocloutsi river is passed, which now bears from our position about twenty miles north by east. The country hourly improves in appearance, and the road, although not all that could be desired, is still far from bad for an African veldt.

It was within an hour of sunset when we reached the place where I intended branching off from the Tati trail. In front was a long mass of reddish sandstone cliffs strongly pregnated with mica, that reflected the departing sun's rays with a very wonderful and beautiful effect. I have seen the cliffs at the back of Pietermaritzburg and facing the town-hill look very brilliant at this hour of the day; in fact, so much so that I and a companion could not tear ourselves away from the hotel windows, so attractive and marvellous was the effect, but it was insignificant in comparison with the rocks about the Mocloutsi.

A dense native population appears to reside in this locality, but they seemed very distrustful of strangers, so avoided all overtures made them of friendship. Their *kraals* I did not see, although doubtless they were close at hand, for daylight was now rapidly giving place to darkness, yet still the aborigines retained their places upon the cliffs. I should imagine that these timorous folks belong to the great Makalaka race, and that their homes, being situated upon debatable ground—for Kama claims one side of the river and Lobengulo the other—they are kept in a constant state of alarm from the frequent raiding parties that pass to and fro. Of course the Bechuanas are not so much to be dreaded as the Matabeles, who, when once started on a predatory incursion, are regular devils incarnate ; and well they need to be so, for there is no returning home to their king's camp if they are unsuccessful, unless always that they do not object to losing their lives. Taking it all in all, this *drift* is one of the most picturesque spots that I know of, and, a few years ago, always swarmed with game ; but vicinity to the great highroad leading to and from the interior, with greatly increased traffic and a considerable-sized mining population within easy distance, has driven the wild animals to haunts less likely to be disturbed.

An hour after sunrise we got started ; our course was nearly due east. Timber was abundant, in some places almost dense, I might say ; so, as we had to make our own road, our progress for some hours was very slow. At length we got out of the woodland into a park-like country, here and there studded with giant *copjes,* covered with parasitic plants in magnificent bloom, among which were abundantly interspersed various species of the ever tropical-looking euphorbias. Water is undoubtedly very scarce in this region through the greater part of the year, but fortunately for us not so now. Here we expected to find giraffes, and it was surprising that we did not, for their favourite food was abundant ; however, we saw spoor, and that not above a day old. My disappointment was the more provoking, as the most fastidious horseman could not have desired a finer piece of ground to gallop over, and I wanted sorely to learn what was the relative speed of horse and *camile* was under such circumstances.

Our outspanning at noon would have made a most charming site for a gentleman's house, provided always that the river was full of water, for terrace rose above terrace, so regular in height and gradations that it was almost believeable that they had been formed by artificial means. There is no doubt but that at one period, and that not very long ago, all this country was much better watered than it is now, so in all probability it possessed a much larger human population; still I could not observe anything to denote their existence, if I except the terraces previously alluded to.

The afternoon was remarkable for nothing but the number of puff adders that were killed. I think in an hour's tramp that I must have seen upwards of a dozen of these deadly poisonous, but, thank Providence! sluggish reptiles. Our outspan that evening was by a *pan* of clear water, almost round in shape, and evidently very deep in the centre. It was not over fifty yards in diameter, with rather steep shelving banks. The margin here told tales of what went on in this neighbourhood, when humanity was not present, for on all the edge could be distinguished fresh spoor of every variety of game in the district, not even excepting the elephant's and buffalo's.

There were no trees in the immediate proximity, so every available person was sent off to an adjoining piece of woodland for all the fuel that he or she could collect. This was a labour of no small importance; but, happily, the toil proved unnecessary, for nothing, save a few hyænas and jackals, visited our location during the night. Let me give the hunter in these regions a word of advice, and write it down in his memory in indelible letters—*under no pretext whatever permit night fires to be wanting about your camp, wherever it may be*. Without them your cattle are never safe, for, like the Scriptural thief in the night, no one knows when or where he may be visited by the marauders, and that means serious losses if he be in utter darkness.

At an early hour we got once more started, and soon after struck an old hunting trail which had been travelled by several waggons a year or two back. Nevertheless, it was of great service to us. Part of our route lay for miles through a grove of tall high brush on a brae side, that had many points of resemblance to one of our own midland counties' copses. Small buck and pig were exceedingly abundant here, but we were all anxious to get forward, so no time was lost in pursuing them. However, our industry and abstention from trifles was soon rewarded, for as soon as I got to the end of the cover I saw stretched before me a lovely *veldt*, on which were feeding not only giraffes, but several herds of the larger antelopes, among whom stalked, with measured pace, a large number of secretary birds, Kaffir and white storks, maribous, the charming crested cranes, and innumerable egrets.

It was a sight to look at, such a sight as would thoroughly repay the naturalist or sportsman for all the expense and trouble of travelling in this seldom visited land, even if he had come from the Antipodes. There are many such places in the interior of Africa, and I cannot help thinking that they have to answer for a big share of the craving that the European explorer ever possesses to have a glimpse at the so-called "Dark Continent." I know myself that I have often in spirit, if not in body, gazed with ecstasy upon such views as I have attempted to describe. Yes, they are lovely, charming, enchanting, while your perfect immunity from intrusion of your own race is another feature that cannot be over-estimated.

Our Massara companion, who joined us at Mahalapsi, had been in this country before, and seemed to know every inch of it. As guide he generally acted, when such services were required, so when I asked where the water was to be found, he stepped to the front and took charge of the leading "fore-loper," and pointed out to him the course we were to travel to obtain that essential of life.

The cavalcade really made an uncommonly pretty picture as it wended its way along the edge of the timbered country, and how could it do otherwise, when the reader has learned its component parts? First there were the waggons, brilliantly painted; over the body of each was a tilt that nearly approached the whiteness of snow. The leading one was drawn by a span of black and white cattle, as nearly alike in size and markings as it was possible to obtain them, while the rear one had nothing but black bullocks in its yokes. These were followed by spare oxen; a little behind them the horses; and all along the line dogs scattered as fancy dictated for them to place themselves. Of the temporary attached natives, little could be said more than that their costume was conspicuous by its absence, but for this want of apparel among their countrymen the drivers made up, for their clothing was of every colour known, while magnificent ostrich plumes—such as would have created a yearning in a duchess's breast to possess them—floated far out in the breeze beyond the rims of their soft "wide-awake" hats. How to carry a whip a white man will never know till he has seen it done by a thorough-bred interior driver. He regards it as his badge of office, his treasure, his ornament, and his plaything. With a twist of his wrist, and apparently little exertion, he can make it produce a report as loud as that of a gun, or, by a trifling underhand manipulation, cause the lash to ping over a bullock's flank with a venomous stinging noise, almost like the exaggerated voice of a mosquito. Then to observe how the fellows walk; the "Grecian bend" or "the Roman fall," in their most palmy days, were never a patch upon the gait assumed by these worthies. A civilized white man can scarcely help laughing to witness these antics, but I always try to suppress the tendency, for men of such importance as your drivers should never be made fun of, or they would lose both respect and position in the eyes of those that are subservient to them. What's the odds, as long as they are happy, or how they strut and pose, if they do their duty? The game that was feeding within two or three hundred yards simply ceased to graze, so that it might the better have a good look at the strange procession that was passing before its view, but as to running away, why, such an idea seemed never to enter their heads. Occasionally one of the dogs, more venturesome than its companions, would make a dash to go in pursuit, but as nothing ran away to be pursued, it would change its mind and return with an injured air and "shame-faced" expression to the position that it had lately vacated.

But our watering, and therefore halting-place, was not long in being reached. It was a grassy-edged pond, with an area of not more than a couple of hundred square yards. At the end where we outspanned the banks were rather precipitous, and there was every indication of deep water near the shore; but the other end was quite the reverse, with a splendid network of lilies, all in full bloom, reaching out for many a yard, till greater depth prevented their further spread. The tree that I had my waggons unyoked under was a meruley, at the time covered with its golden yellow acid fruit, and so abundantly provided with leaves as to guarantee ample protection from the mid-day sun. Elephants had been here lately, for their *ordure* lay abundantly about, no doubt attracted to the locality by the fruit that hung overhead, of which they are reported to be remarkably fond. But this meruley was not the only tree that grew close to the water; others, species of the banian, stretched their limbs out over the pool, from which tendrils dropped almost till touching its surface, and from the termination of each was suspended a soda-water-bottle shaped nest, formed of closely-woven bleached grasses. It must have been the pairing season, for all appeared as busy as possible in adding to or refitting their domiciles. They are always in a state of activity, very fussy, and industrious, but apparently not quarrelsome. The hen, which is frequently the case, and quite in opposition to civilized human ways, is dressed in the most undemonstrative and unattractive brown plumage, while her lord and master is arrayed in a gorgeous yellow suit, which I believe is cast off as soon as the courting season is over. The scientific name by which this bird is usually known by professed naturalists is *Hypantornis velatus.*

With unbounded satisfaction, as may be well supposed, I sat for a couple of hours that evening watching these charming birds, and viewing my horses and oxen fill themselves to repletion with the clear cool water that was so abundantly provided by this out-of-the-way, almost unknown, desert spring.

The crisp, bright morning that greeted me when I left my waggon at break of day was delightfully pleasant, although a trifle cold. But the poor natives suffered from this low temperature very much, and were most unwilling to come from under the shelter in which they had passed the night, and when they did so it was not without being closely enveloped in their various-coloured blankets or soft, warm carosses. Even then their movements were as cramped as those of an "old screw" before it had got a preliminary canter. A little exercise and the sun's appearance soon puts them all right, and gives them once more the remarkable elasticity of their general carriage. It is these cool nights and really chilly mornings that make these upland plains so healthy to the European constitution, for the heat of the days is prostrating, especially an hour or two after the sun has passed the zenith; but there is one thing that should be remembered, there is not a particle of damp—unless during the rainy season—existing away from the environs of the rivers and valleys. In proof of this, the finest metal mechanism will not suffer from rust, although exposed for weeks, even months, to the full action of the atmosphere.

Fires were soon lighted and the cooking pots got under full swing; the savoury smell from the latter bringing the most disinclined from the warm corner in which he had passed the night.

My drivers and the Massara, without waiting to feed, started off prospecting. Their absence was but short; they had sighted giraffes, and within a short distance of camp. The dogs, ever troublesome when not wanted, were soon secured, the horses saddled, and forth we went, inwardly feeling that we were about to enjoy our sport under the most favourable circumstances—a sport deserving of appreciation, when I state that I believe that there are scarcely thirty white men living who have had the chance to participate in it.

Deer-stalking, salmon-fishing, and tiger-shooting can easily be obtained by those who have long purses, but giraffe-hunting requires more; for, independent of the expense, weeks and months of patience must be spent, treck, treck, trecking, before you arrive in the *habitat* of this colossal game. Every year it is being driven further into the interior, and soon, like the white rhinoceros, scarcely a specimen will be found south of the Zambesi, and to the greater part of the northern shores of this grand river you cannot take horses on account of the tsetze fly. Yes, those who wish to add to the list of field sports that they have enjoyed, by riding a giraffe to a standstill, must hurry up, and be quick about taking action, for the time is not far distant when such a performance will be a moral impossibility, unless it be accomplished among the Hamram Arabs or other followers of the Mahdi, a prospect that seems very doubtful at the present date.

William, my driver, was mounted as formerly, and I had my other "skimmel," a beast that I knew could gallop more than fast for a South African bred horse, but to do so he required ground that was more than usually clear and free from impediments. Our present hunting ground was all that could be desired in this respect, so I determined to learn the relative merits, in regard to speed, between a moderately fleet horse—one that could well gallop his mile within two minutes—and a mature giraffe, in the most fit state for such a spin, that I could select.

In a very open grove of what the Boers call kameeldorn (*Acacia giraffæ*) I sighted the game. Apparently they were quite unconscious of being intruded upon, for they all were busy enjoying their morning meal. I secreted myself behind a patch of thick bush, and, through my binocular, watched the graceful creatures for some minutes. The delicacy with which they apparently fed, and the small quantity—not more than a leaf or two—that they took into their mouths at one time, seemed entirely inadequate to supply the wants of so large a body. Their tongue, which is of an abnormal length, very slim, and unquestionably very sensitive, by its retracted power draws the fresh and carefully-selected foliage into the feeder's mouth. From specimens in captivity of course all this can be learned, but I have observed that shut up or semi-domesticated beasts very much alter their habits from those they practised when in a wild state.

In no representative of the animal creation is this better exemplified than in the ostrich; confine it, familiarize it with mankind, and the most timid of all living creatures becomes the boldest and most obtrusive. I may even use stronger terms, and say the most dangerous.

A trifle over 300 yards separated me from the game. I intended riding under the most promising circumstances, so I took an extra pull at the girths, shortened the stirrup leathers a hole, threw my cheroot away, and got well down in my saddle. "Ready, William?" "Yes, baas." "I'll take the largest cow, you anything else you like, but if you value a whole skin, don't come near me." "Yes, baas." "Then ride, and the devil take the hindmost."

By this time the game had seen us, and commenced sailing off with that swinging, easy, yet far from graceful gait peculiar to their race. The moment the giraffes saw that we intended mischief—in fact, recognized that we were in pursuit of them—they at once increased their stride, and in a few minutes after were going their very best. My mount was in rare heart and fettle, even a pull upon his bit to steady him and keep him within his stride was violently resisted, while the going, although not equal to that of an English racecourse, was galloping ground not often to be found in South Africa. My double 10-bore was the only impediment to my pleasure, for its weight and awkward shape required both skill and ability to keep it from bumping upon my saddle-tree, and thereby bruising my knuckles. But in the excitement you think little of these things, the paramount feeling being to get alongside your game, and that as rapidly as possible. There was but sparse brush, and seldom any of it of such a height as to switch your face, but when this did occur, gun and right arm, if soon enough employed, formed a very effective guard. So far the ground had been quite open, but now a narrow belt of timber occurred, with a fallen tree right in the course that the game was pursuing. It looked rather formidable, but the giraffes straddled over it—not jumped it—in a very ludicrous, still effective, manner. So I got my "skimmel" well in hand, and resolved to risk the fencing qualities of my nag, for jump he could, and that right well, when in the mind to do so. Within ten or fifteen strides of the tree, I almost regretted my decision, but it was too late to change my resolve, so, with a touch of the spur and a steadying hold of the head, I drove my nag straight at it. Phew! he cleared it like a bird, with a good foot to spare. A few yards more, and we were again in the open country, and plenty of it before us, so I made the best of this advantage, soon passed the old bull—already giving evidence of being blown—singled out a grand cow, and drove her to the right hand away from her companions. I knew, of course, that I had the "heels of her," still her speed was not to be trifled with, for she looked as fresh as at the start, while the long, ungainly legs measured their strides with the regularity of clockwork. Here I determined not to fire till I was well up to the cow's flank, and a trifle or so behind the line of her shoulders. A touch of the spur brought me there, so, thrusting my smooth-bore at the game as if it had been a spear I was handling, I pulled the trigger when the muzzle was six feet from the game, and, simultaneously with the report, the loftiest of all existing animals lay hopelessly struggling on the ground. Vaulting from my saddle, and reversing my reins, so that my horse would not give me the slip—a trick he had once played me—I approached the giant beast. Its struggles to rise were terrible to witness, so I put an end to the pain that the poor creature was doubtless suffering by giving it the second barrel through the head, which instantly extinguished life. I had had a glorious gallop, a successful run, and effected my purpose without giving unnecessary pain; but, after all, I doubt very much that I felt quite clear of those admonishing qualms of conscience that whispered to me a reproach for the part I had taken in depriving such a beautiful creature of life.

For a long time I sat by and gazed upon this splendid beast. Although not the first of the race that I had killed, this unquestionably was the finest, both as far as size (for a cow), condition, darkness, and evenness of markings of the hide; in fact, it was a perfect beast in every respect.

The space traversed before running into this giraffe I made to be quite a mile and a half; at the rate of speed that my horse went, and the time it took me to overhaul the game, I should say that its pace was about a mile in two minutes and a few seconds, about the time that the fastest American trotter can cover the same distance. However, it ought to be remembered that the terrain traversed was very much less suited for speed than an artificially made trotting track.

It will be seen from the above narration that the giraffe cannot be considered a very fast animal; still it takes a good colonial horse as much as it can do (with such a start as mentioned) to overtake it. Moreover, my horse was "salted"—that is, had gone through the horse sickness; and I feel convinced that that experience has a tendency to lessen their speed. However, this is a matter of opinion. Again, I think that if I had had to go half a mile further, I should never have got within such short shooting range, for if the game I write of be not forced beyond its pace, figuratively it can go for ever. Further, when the ground is rough and irregular, trees numerous and underbrush dense, I doubt very much whether a mounted man can overtake it at all, unless he be as reckless a rider as Mr. Baldwin, of South African hunting fame, or the late Major Persse, of the 13th Light Infantry; but then he was a Galway Persse, and a "Blazer" to boot.

By this time my Massara had come up, and close on his heels were some of my people, followed by a tag-rag and bobtail of the natives. Where the last had sprung from it would be difficult to say, for I had not seen a single individual during the chase. These people are just like the vultures. Not one may be in sight, but the moment you slaughter anything they will make their appearance in force, till every rock and point of observation in your proximity is perfectly crowded with them.

The strangers evinced considerable trepidation at first in coming near the white man, but the Massara assured them that he was harmless, and did not wish to eat any of their "piccaninies," after which assertion they became objectionably obtrusive. These people are of the Macalaca race, and vassals of Lobengulo. Their lot is rather a hard one, for being cowards they are bullied by every one. However, a white man can have little sympathy with them on account of their misfortunes, for they are incorrigible thieves and most audacious liars.

Having given instructions to my people for the game to be skinned, cut up, and carried into camp, and to employ some of the Macalacas to assist them in the last duty, for which service they were to be paid in flesh, I started for the westward, whence I had heard the report of several shots. On my way I came across the blind-eyed "moke," who had evidently, while his master was busy, taken the opportunity to slip off. No cares seemed to oppress his mind, nor did any thoughts of danger attached to such a course appear to occur to him. The grass that surrounded him was sweet, young, and abundant, so he was resolved to obtain a stomach full of it, which resolution he was assiduously putting into practice. When the old beast became aware that I was near him, he simply raised his head, gave me a knowing look out of his one eye, and recommenced to feed in the most unconcerned manner, the desertion of his master being apparently a matter of not the slightest importance. Rogue as he was, he knew better than to give me any trouble to capture him, so amicably we pursued our way towards where the firing was still taking place.

I was not long in finding my henchman, but oh! what a "gruesome sight" presented itself before me. The poor old bull giraffe was struggling on the ground, making the most determined efforts to rise, but numerous wounds and loss of blood prevented it carrying out its purpose. The brave old beast bore its torturing pains gallantly, for not a murmur escaped its lips. I thought that I could distinguish in its large soft eye a look that appealed for compassion and sympathy, but such was in vain, for William, I have my doubts, never knew what such feelings were, and if he did, they were certainly not going to be exercised by him towards one of the brute creation. I declare I saw tears, or something that exactly resembled them, coming from the stricken beast's eyes. Such an exhibition I could stand no longer, so I sprang off my horse's back, and, almost within striking distance finished the tragedy by firing a bullet through the unfortunate animal's head. This step, meriting approval as it did, very nearly cost me my life, for my servant, with the usual carelessness characteristic of his race, shot at the same moment, and the bullet passed within an inch or two of my head. Black fellows are the most reckless, careless, thoughtless beings in existence when handling firearms. In a Kaffir war I have always believed that, if you are employed with native levies, you stand a far greater chance of being shot by your own men than by the enemy. How the struggle for life of this poor creature was so protracted was simply the result of William standing some distance off from the game, and blazing into the carcass without taking definite aim for any vital place.

I have no dislike to the natives, whether they be Zulus, Kaffirs, or Bechuanas, quite the reverse, but they are, with the exception of the Boers, in their treatment of the inferior animals, the cruellest, most barbarous wretches that can be imagined, and their women and infants are just the same. The slaughter of a bullock or sheep they would not miss for any other pleasure, and the longer that the tortures are prolonged the greater do they enjoy the function.

This bull giraffe was barely twenty feet and six inches high, and twenty feet and two inches long, from the apex of the crown to the termination of the tail. It was extremely difficult to measure, from its configuration, as regards height, but the summit of the head between the horns was where I obtained its altitude; wither measurement in such a formed beast would obviously give no idea of its stature. It was the largest specimen I had seen, and the natives unanimously agreed that they had never known it surpassed.

Obviously it was very old; the tassel of the tail was worn down to the length of the fibres of a scrubbing brush, while its hoofs exhibited evident signs of decay. From its left side, just in rear of the shoulder blade, was extracted a 12-bore bullet, which had made a lodgment between the inner and outer skin, and, judging from all appearances, it must have been there for a long time. The calibre of this ball induces me to think that it was fired by a European, as the Boers, until they became possessors of modern breech-loading guns, only shot with weapons of a very large bore. At the best this idea can only be surmise, for since the opening of the Diamond fields, guns of all calibre have been taken into the interior.

One thing, however, I can be certain of; the carcass stunk so that it was impossible to remain to leeward of it any length of time without feeling those qualms that surely denote an inclination to be sick. This stench, for by no less powerful word could I call it, was, at the first inhalation of it, not unlike very powerful musk, afterwards it defied description. Yet the natives seemed to enjoy this foul odour as much as we would fragrant lavender water or "jockey club." My success had supplied my camp with a sufficiency of fresh meat for temporary wants, and I also hoped with *beltong* (sun-dried meat) as a provision against want, if game ran short, so I forbade a particle of the veteran's carcass being removed in the direction of our outspan. When this verdict was made known, the Macalacas appeared suddenly attacked with a frenzy, every revolting passion possessed by them, in a moment was exhibited, and quicker than could be imagined a tolerably orderly crowd was transferred into a lot of demons, ready to fight to the death with their nearest and dearest friends for a share of the repulsive carcass that was before them.

I did not wait to see the onslaught, but as I rode away I could not help regretting that these brutes in human form should belong to the same race as myself. I wonder if our forefathers, at any period, were ever such devils as these Macalacas are; if so, the less said about ancient lineage and ancestors coeval with the flood, the better.

After I had ridden a good half-mile I could still hear yelling and shouting, with an occasional fierce interjection, that plainly told that the strife was still being continued with unabating vigour. Others were also hurrying to the feast, fit associates for those that they were going to join, although I very much doubt whether the vulture or human beings would make the most repulsive exhibitions of themselves.

The subject is too horrible to dwell upon, so we will pass on to pleasanter themes. On arrival I almost found my camp deserted by human beings, still I had some friends left to welcome me, for all the dogs, from the largest to the smallest, sang out lustily, with thoroughly honest hearts, a right loyal welcome in honour of their master's return.

It is wonderful the craving that all seem to obtain in these regions for fat; the black man's love of it is well known, but Europeans, who scarcely ever touched it at home, here always possess an extraordinary longing for it. I imagine that it results from the scarcity of vegetable diet that exists among hunters and traders that visit this region; thus nothing is considered a greater delicacy than marrow, and that of the giraffe takes precedence of all others.

Although not a *gourmet*, I have had opportunities of knowing practically what are considered the greatest delicacies, but ortolans, turtle, canvas-back ducks, and *paté de fois gras* all succumb, in my estimation, to the marrow last mentioned. To cook it and serve to perfection I will inform my readers, for who knows, they might some day find themselves where the rapidly disappearing giraffe yet exists. Take some biscuits—those made by Messrs. Peek and Frean, and called captain's biscuits, I used—toast them well, then scald them with boiling water, which strain off as soon as possible. On these spread your marrow, which has previously been cooked in the bones; sprinkle the whole with cayenne pepper and salt to suit taste, serve on a very hot plate, and, unless your ideas differ very much from mine, you will endorse my verdict, viz. that the dish is simply delicious.

That evening, before sitting down to supper, I was very much amused at the persistence and boldness of the pursuit of a guinea fowl by a hobby. One would have supposed that so small a bird of prey would have been satisfied with a finch or dove, but there are frequently big minds in small bodies, as this circumstance proved. The guinea fowl had the fortune to escape by gaining the shelter of some dense brushwood, but it was only accomplished by the proverbial narrow shave called "the hair of your teeth." Yet, after the escape of the intended victim, the little desperado patiently kept watch and ward for nearly half an hour, in the vain hope that its intended prey would again come forth.

Next morning I took my shot gun, resolved to add the persistent little marauder to my collection, but it was gone, doubtless wearied with its long watch, to seek new hunting grounds. However, I procured a far more beautiful ornithological treasure, viz. a malachite-crested kingfisher (*Corythornis cyanostigma*, Sharpe's Cat), a very rare bird at the best of times, and particularly more so when distant from running water. It is in plumage a most exquisite little beauty, rivalling in brilliancy of plumage the finest emerald. Like our home bird, its flight is so swift that it passes beyond the observer's range of vision almost as fast as it is perceived. It was perched upon a bough of one of the trees, only a few feet above the surface of the water, and I doubt much if my attention would have been attracted to it but for the incessant rapidity with which it darted to the *vley* and returned to its perch. This species has a very distinct melancholy musical note, which it invariably gave utterance to soon after it had swallowed its tiny prey. As I had no very fine shot, I opened a cartridge case, and filled up the part the coarse had occupied with sand, which answered my purpose admirably, as the range was short. However, I should not advise this example to be frequently followed, especially with a valuable gun, for such gritty substances can scarcely fail to be injurious to the barrels. When the sun was about attaining its full power, a very dark cloud appeared directly to windward. We were not long kept in ignorance of its composition, being locusts, for it rapidly drew towards the camp, and was followed by thousands and thousands of birds, of which black kites (*Milvus migrans*), hobbies (*Falco vespertinus*) and innumerable bee-eaters of different species, seemed to preponderate in numbers. As the naturalist Andersson states he did on a similar occasion, I took a section of the sky to enumerate, and came to the conclusion that there must have been more than ten thousand birds in pursuit of these destructive insects.

However, the flight passed off to the south-west of our camp, but not without an example being afforded us of the fearless intrepidity of one of the kites. William had been pounding for a time with unremitting exertion a piece of meat destined for my supper. For some reason he was called away, but before going he placed the steak upon the table at which I was sitting, and only a few inches from my elbow, when a rush through the atmosphere occurred, that it almost took away my breath to listen to, and before I could recover from my surprise, and be prompt enough to baulk the marauder, the kite was up in the air a hundred feet or more, with my intended meal in its possession.

That was not half as ludicrous as a similar *contretemps* I saw on the Tugila during the Zulu war. A young Scotch soldier, evidently very lately brought from his Highland home, was carrying a piece of beef, suspended from a stick over his shoulder. No doubt the recruit anticipated a good feed, for he had a most self-satisfied expression on his broad, healthy-looking countenance. He had scarcely passed me more than a few yards when a kite made a swoop at the flesh, and in an instant after was in possession of the prize, and making off with it. "Saundey" seemed to be incapable of understanding the situation for some minutes, when he let loose from his already well-opened mouth, "You d——d hoody craw, if I had you by the neck, I'd twist your blasted head off."

The flight of locusts had one good effect, more particularly as I wished to write up my journal; it took all idlers off in pursuit of it, even the dogs. Of course, the cattle and horses had long since gone to pasture under the care of their respective herds, or no doubt they would have joined in the exodus, for everything in these parts—unless it be an unexceptional European—eat locusts. About one p.m. I turned into my sleeping waggon for a read and snooze, with a bundle of those literary treasures —*Chambers' Journal.* All was as still as the grave about me, and as I felt very much disposed for a siesta, I turned on my side to have the proverbial forty winks. I was just on the line of delimitation where the land of Nod commences, when I heard, as I supposed, a lion roar, and at no great distance off. The time of day, and the evidence on every side of the proximity of man, caused me to think that my ears had deceived me, so I simply sat up on my *cartel* (swing bed), rubbed my eyes, and listened. Again the noise was repeated, the same full volumed bass sound, and it came evidently from among the trees on the edge of the *vley.* "No mistake this time," I exclaimed to myself, as I took down from the slings my ·500 double Express rifle and shoved half-a-dozen cartridges into my trousers pockets. Over the *forekist* I slowly and carefully shoved my head, and peered into every nook and corner with penetrating gaze doubly intensified. Nothing could I see, however, not a sign of life visible, if I except some of the more industrious nest builders that were at work, repairing or building their pendent homes at the ends of the boughs that hung over the water. Again, however, I heard the noise, but it was further off, and apparently now proceeded from some bush that was just sufficiently high and thick to hide such an intruder as I expected to find. So I slipped on to the *dissel-boom,* from it to the ground, and made my way as rapidly and unconspicuously as possible for the shelter of a tree that had a large ant-hill surrounding its base. From this point of vantage I got a good look round, but nothing animate was in sight that I could distinguish within twenty-five or thirty yards. At length I raised my point of vision higher, when lo ! not a lion, but three ostriches, a cock and two hens, were seen speeding over the open as hard as they could lay their feet to the ground. They were at least one hundred and twenty yards off now, and several limbs and branches intervened, so as to prevent me shooting. When they traversed thirty yards more, I got a fairish chance, and missed with both barrels. As usual under such circumstances, I blamed the rifle, for I thought that I held dead upon the cock bird each time. Possibly I was right, and as a salve to my wounded feelings, I will still believe that I was, for these light Express bullets are most uncertain even at that distance. Whether it was mine or the gun's fault, I lost at least sixty or seventy pounds' worth of feathers.

No lion had been near the camp; it was the cock ostrich I had heard, and I might have known it from the time of day, if I had stopped to consider. By a long chalk, however, I am not the first European who has been fooled by this bird, nor doubtless will I be the last, for even a native on this point sometimes makes a mistake. This is not the general call of the *struthionidæ*, but only is used in the love-making season, or immediately before a fall of rain after a protracted dry term.

The report of my rifle soon brought William to me, followed by a rag-tag and bobtail of my own people, and strangers, who, of course, were anxious to know what I had shot at; however, I would not gratify them, as I knew my worthy driver would do nothing but lament for the next four-and-twenty hours the chance I had lost of making money.

But my taciturnity did not deceive him, for in strong language the meddling brute would continually allude to my bad shooting. At length I went to bed earlier than usual, but not before vowing that if he even whispered the word ostrich again within my hearing, I would lay the *jambock* about his shoulders. This did not even have the desired effect, for I am certain I did hear the confounded lamentations again, for William was just like a white woman, he would have the last word, even if he died for it; black ones do not act so in this respect. This is doubtless the result of different bringing up. It is a wondrous pity that we cannot introduce into this country their method of early education pursued among the weaker sex.

When my people returned to camp late in the afternoon, they brought with them large quantities of locusts. These they eat *au naturel*, beat into a paste, or parched. I had not the strength of nerve to attempt this native *bonne bouche* in the first state, but in both the others it tasted remarkably well, with a strong vegetable flavour. Those that were made into paste had not a very appetizing appearance, but they were no worse in this respect than many condiments that are popular. The parched insects—they lost their legs and wings in the process—reminded me so much of shelled shrimps, that I forthwith hunted up from my stores some curry powder, and when cooked with it they were really excellent. Instead of flights of locusts visiting a locality in this part of the earth being looked upon as a misfortune, exactly the reverse is the case. But it has one disadvantage, for it causes to assemble in its proximity all the beasts of prey as well as reptiles. I have no doubt but that after a protracted meat diet this change of food is very wholesome, for it acts as a general laxative upon the system.

The cry in camp next day was for more flesh. Fancy two giraffes disappearing in two days. Of course my people did not eat it all, but were very considerably helped by the strangers on whose ground the game was killed. Even taking that into consideration, a visitor would have thought that all were amply provided with food for a week; but the fact is that the natives are such gormandizers, that they think nothing of stowing away six or seven pounds of flesh at a sitting. Of course these lengthened orgies generally take place during the dark hours, and are rather an advantage than otherwise to the traveller, for they necessitate good fires being kept up, so he may with considerable confidence in the security of his beasts retire to his waggon, his mind at rest and body comforted with anticipations of a good night's rest.

But my people, and the strangers that were permitted to remain with them, did not spend the night so unprofitably for me as might have been expected. Far from it, for they settled, during their late sitting, all the details of a drive, which would entail upon them a lot of work, and to a certain extent permit me to be little more than a simple looker on.

On turning out at dawn, William and the Massara approached me. Their countenances were grave, and their manner stamped with heavy importance. On my taking my seat, they requested permission to speak. I in turn ordered them to be seated, looking all the time as serious as if I had been a judge about to pass the death sentence on a criminal. If the natives have anything to communicate to you, believe me this is the only way to treat them.

After a considerable pause, I said in an authoritative bass voice, "William, bring me my pipe and tobacco, but first tell the Massara to fetch some embers and make a fire, for the morning is cold, and the importance of your business may detain us."

"Yes, baas," my man replied as promptly as a non-commissioned officer on parade, and both proceeded upon their respective errands, while I marched to and fro, as if in deep contemplation.

I imagined that for some reasons of their own these worthies wanted me to shift my camp, or do something else equally unimportant. Soon the fire was lighted, my table placed near it, and on it was laid my pipe, while around us, but at respectful distance, sat arranged in a circle every man, woman, and child that was not otherwise engaged. South African blacks are as a rule fluent orators, and their declamation is perfect.

But, to cut a long story short, their views were soon disclosed to me, which I will condense into a few words. A stranger had visited them last night. He reported that there were two parties of giraffes, some *vilde beests* and *zebras*, as well as several species of the larger antelopes frequenting a piece of *veldt* a few miles off, and that if I would take up a position pointed out to me, all the game would be driven past my hiding-place within easy range.

Of course I did not jump into concurrence with this plan at once, as such an assent would have lessened in their eyes the value of my approval, so silently I sat for some time, puffing immense clouds of smoke into the air, as importantly as ever did *grand seignior*, although I felt all the time very much disposed to laugh, particularly if my eyes casually fell upon the serious countenances of William and the Massara, or the few dozen earnest black-skinned white-toothed humans that backed them up. Considering that I had tried all their patience long enough, I rose with unbending dignity and addressed them, "Your proposal is good, it shall be done; when do you commence?" The driver interpreted, and with applause he rendered my words into Sisuana. "Procrastination is the thief of time" was evidently thought by all, for each at once armed himself, and left the camp, to hurry to the place of assembly, but the two proposers of the details of the campaign remained with me.

In an hour afterwards, or soon after eight, the Massara commenced to show impatience, so we procured our arms, and followed his guidance. Three guns we took with us, two smooth 10-bore doubles, one for William, the other for myself, also my double Express ·500 rifle, in case a lion or leopard should show up, the bushman having provided himself with a handful of assegais and a shield. The charge of the non-rifled guns was 7 drs. of powder and a spherical bullet.

We had only about two miles to walk, the direction being about south-east, the slight wind that existed being nearly due east. I had not been this way before, and the country seemed quite undisturbed, for I could make out with the aid of my binocular several parties of *hartebeests* as well as sassabis feeding as quietly and unsuspiciously of danger as fat cattle in a midland county meadow. The country was very pretty indeed, being here and there broken in its surface by long parallel ledges of loose stone covered with dwarf brush, through which occasionally a good sized tree grew. In the open flat was very little timber, and that invariably small, but ant-hills, some of considerable magnitude, existed, with the characteristic abundance that these unsightly excrescences are to be found throughout southern tropical Africa.

About a hundred yards from a *donga* I was pointed out my shelter behind an ant-hill about seven feet high. William had a similar stand, about two hundred yards north-west of me, while the bushman expressed his intention of taking care of himself after his own manner.

Near the donga was a solitary tree, nearly thirty feet high ; this the Massara ascended to learn how the operations were being carried out. While so perched he carried on an animated conversation with my driver ; this indicated that there was no great hurry, as yet, in gaining our respective ambuscades.

Being anxious to see how the drive was conducted, I ascended to his side, and from my elevated position got a grand view for miles. With the aid of my Dolland I could distinctly make out that the number of the game that I had previously observed had been considerably augmented, and that all were heading in our direction, but quite unalarmed, for they constantly halted to feed. Up till now not a sight of a human being, as far as the native beaters were concerned, could be seen, so the land truly might have been uninhabited by man. At length I made out six giraffes proceeding at a slightly hurried pace to join the other animals. This companionship seemed to give them confidence, for soon they relaxed their speed to a slow walk, occasionally stopping to have a look around. Soon after there appeared to be an alarm among all, for they came on in our direction for a few hundred yards at a more rapid gait, then renewed their former *nonchalant* air. Suddenly, the moment following, every head was thrown up, all took a long stare, as if to satisfy themselves that they had grounds for suspicion, when again their course towards us was renewed. Now I got my first glimpse of the beaters, but only of four or five, and they were a long way behind the game, which was still considerably over a mile distant from me. At this time I thought that the plans of men and mice were about to be verified, for a restless cow *hartebeest*, with a big following, seemed to be resolved to break off to the eastward. For this purpose she and her party had gone about two hundred yards at a sharp trot, and I was about to shut up my glasses in despair, when first one black head and then another popped up, directly in the route that the animals intended taking. This was sufficient, back came the suspicious beasts, who joined the ruck of comrades they had previously left. At length I could distinguish nearly all the natives, and clearly make out their formation, which was lunette shaped, with the horns thrown forward. The beaters covered an immense distance, yet I doubt if there were a hundred of them all told. The cautious manner in which they advanced, and the correctness with which they kept their distance, were specimens of light infantry tactics that I never saw beaten even by the Rifle Brigade.

The Massara guide now indicated that it was time for us to take up our respective posts, a minute sufficed for me to gain mine, William I saw for an instant immediately afterwards, but what had become of the bushman I could not imagine, so abrupt and unaccountable had been his disappearance that the earth might have swallowed him.

I soon ceased to wonder, as I had other affairs to attract my attention, for the droves of game were now getting within measurable distance. They did not hurry, nor did they appear alarmed, for doubtless they only dreaded the foes whose presence they were aware of, and they were now a long way behind. The whole body of wild animals must have counted considerably over a hundred, hartebeests, sassabis, and zebras numerically being in the largest proportions. The different species were all intermingled, yet the greatest harmony and goodwill seemed to be dominant among them. The giraffes soberly stalked along as if they were on stilts; now and then one of the larger antelopes would step aside to pick up an inviting leaf or bunch of grass, which having accomplished it would trot on to resume its former place; while the zebras, ever full of fun and frolic, kicked up their heels and "bucked" in sheer wantonness, and as if they considered the whole affair as a matter of infinite jest. The *vilde beests* certainly looked fierce, and not unfrequently lowered their heads and shook their formidable horns as if they intended mischief, but such conduct never for a moment entered their thoughts. It is a way they have, but never are appearances more deceptive. When first I witnessed such sights as this, I always found myself asking the question, Is it possible that all these beasts are wild? that they can go where they choose, and that they belong to no one? and although I answered myself in the affirmative, yet a dweller in civilization has been so long associated with domestic animals and no others that I could scarcely credit that I was correct. There are many grand and exciting sights to be seen. When a child I used to think that nothing could exceed in attractiveness the gathering of the highland cattle off the hill sides, and herding them along the roads when on their way to southern markets, but this lost much of its zest after I had witnessed in Spain the bulls being hurried along—half mad with the excitement—to the *plazo de toros*. But even that is nothing, nothing at all, to viewing a crowd of African game under circumstances such as I have been describing. I suppose it must be because they are truly wild, veritable cattle without owners or controllers. Another piquancy of flavour may possibly be added to the sight, by the knowledge that there are very few Europeans indeed, whether born in the purple or fed with a gold pap-spoon, who have witnessed the like.

This attraction cannot be because there is a spice of danger associated with being an onlooker of such gatherings, for there is absolutely none, unless a crusty lion or spiteful leopard should be among the herd, or an irate buffalo bull, or possibly worse, buffalo cow with a calf, in whose way you suddenly found yourself.

A pack of highly bred fox-hounds in full cry, followed by a well-mounted field of good horsemen, streaming away over a wide grass country, is certainly a sight worth seeing, a sight that I have known foreigners travel hundreds of miles to witness, but even that is not a patch upon a view of a hundred or two head of the larger tropical Africa fauna, when trooped together in retreat before a native " drive."

The Massara well knew what he was about when he assigned us to our respective places, for it was now obvious that unless some very improbable, and unforeseen *contretemps* occurred, the greater part of the approaching cavalcade would pass my lurking place within very moderate range. The first to come inside of shooting distance was a mare zebra ; she was an old, restless, fidgety, out-of-condition looking beast, with very faded markings, and a perfect rat-tail, but close at her heels followed another of her sex, different in every respect, for she was as fat and sleek as an easy life and plenty of food could make her ; nevertheless, she was followed by a youngster about a month old that seemed to resent with an infinite display of temper, the parent's objection to halt, that it might gratify its appetite, Unless I had been starving, and then only with the greatest reluctance, would I have drawn a trigger upon them. Their conduct was so home-like, exactly what every one has seen in some of our pasture lands, that at once they gained a warm and sympathetic place in my heart. Anything that recalls home life is certain to do this even among the most confirmed wanderers from their native land. Close after these came some stragglers, immediately followed by the main body, but I had resolved to kill a giraffe and nothing else, their size affording so much more food than any of the others. At length they were abreast of me, the range was about sixty yards, so I alligned my sight upon the finest cow. Simultaneously with the report the unfortunate fell, but a desperate effort placed her again upon her legs; however, the second barrel once more brought her down, quantities of blood now poured from the poor creature's mouth, the legs and neck made a few convulsive violent struggles, and in a minute or less the victim was lifeless.

Taking my rifle, I proceeded to the scene of my handiwork (?), and had scarcely covered half the distance when something moving caught my eye. What it was I could not say, for some ant-hills had most inopportunely hid it, but I was not long kept in doubt; a space where these impediments were not so numerous occurred, and over it, in full view, bounded a good sized leopard, breaking back directly towards where the beaters were advancing from. The shot presented was not an easy one, and the range was a good hundred yards, so I placed my Express to my shoulder; but twice as I was about to press the trigger ant-hills intervened. At length I got a fair chance, and put in both barrels, and missed, I won't say like a man, but like a duffer, and the leopard seemed to think so; for long after it was out of sight I could hear its deep guttural, laughing bark, Wah! wah! wah!

As I shoved in fresh cartridges I had a hope that it would come across some of the Macalacas, and that they would put an assegai or two through the marauder's glossy coat. No such luck took place; that family know well how to take care of themselves, and this one did not belie its race.

However long it has taken me to tell this little unexpected incident, it all transpired in less than half a minute, and however exciting it was while it lasted, it did not prevent me hearing the double report of William's gun, so I turned to see what my gallant driver was about. He was loading, and before him lay a dead hartebeest, but beyond an exciting scene was taking place. The game, which were now going at their best pace, had swung round to the left, doubtless to get advantage of the wind, and so avoid further unseen dangers; the Massara was upon its rear flanks, and was most recklessly plying a zebra with assegais, although the brute kept momentarily charging after him in the most savage manner. The skill with which he avoided these, and the adroit way that he handled his shield, was as perfect as the performance of a crack party of *tuleros* playing with an infuriated bull in one of sunny Andalusia's famous arenas. But it was a dangerous game, and sundry escapes appeared such narrow shaves that I thought my plucky friend would be compelled to give up his "checks," and acknowledge himself vanquished, when back he returned further to excite the savage beast. I almost swore at the fellow's recklessness; but what will these natives not do when they know that the eyes of a white man are upon them? However, his rashness very nearly settled his account, for the zebra, open mouthed, fairly coursed him for upwards of fifty yards, the thin hide shield, several times, apparently just in the nick of time, saving him from a worry that not improbably would have resulted in death. These "chevies" never terminated without the pursued in turn turning aggressor, when he buried a fresh weapon deep in the exasperated brute's flank or shoulder. At length I got a clear front shot at about forty yards, and I placed my hollow bullet into the unfortunate's chest, a little over where the windpipe entered its body. The result was electrical; without an effort of resistance the stricken brute subsided, simply sank on the ground, without even giving a spasmodic struggle.

The hollow Express bullet at short ranges is a terribly destructive weapon, and could, I am convinced, be made a much more generally useful instrument if the base of the projectile, or solid part of the bullet, were moulded to thrice the length of those now in vogue. At present it is useless on thick-skinned game; with the alteration I propose, I cannot help thinking that the reverse would be the result.

The death of the zebra disclosed what I had no idea of, viz. that it had been severely wounded by William's second shot, but the bullet was placed too far back to produce immediate results. I should have thought the hartebeest would have been sufficient to gratify my man's love of slaughter, but it is useless to think or hope so, for a native's craving for blood is insatiable; moreover, zebra's flesh with its sickly, sweetish flavour is preferred by them to any meat that the veldt produces. In this *penchant* they resemble the beasts of prey, so that you may always conclude that lions are numerous in a locality if zebras are there plentiful. At first I was afraid that the beautiful mare with the foal was the victim, but I was happy to discover that such was not the case. As it may not be generally known, the teeth of these grand animals are most formidable weapons, and can inflict wounds to which many a human being has succumbed ; more ! among some of the tribes, if a man or woman gets so injured, they are deemed to be ever afterwards unclean, and are expelled by their people into perpetual banishment.

For the better protection of my camp, and to obtain a little privacy, I had made a strong fence around it of the most formidable prickly shrubs that could be collected. In spite of this, during my absence, several of the Macalacas had intruded beyond the forbidden boundary, and had given abundant proofs that pilfering was the object of this outrage. One of my forelopers, assisted by the boy that looked after the dogs, attempted to argue with them on the impropriety of their conduct, but as such a mild course was unavailing, they resorted to stronger means, when both got most seriously mauled, the first named receiving in the scrimmage a blow on the head from a *knobkeerie* that would have scattered the brains of anything but a nigger's.

I insisted that the culprit should be given up, but my eloquence and vehemence were thrown away; in consequence, I explained that the first stranger that came within my enclosure without invitation would be dealt with as if he were the offender. Even this threat did not restrain the worthless crew, so I told William and his staff to have their *keeries* handy, watch me, and when I gave the signal, go at the intruders. The Massara said he would keep beside me, as my special guard, for it was as likely as not that one of the scoundrels would throw a club or assegai at me when the *mêlée* commenced. Hostilities were precipitated by the *foreloper* stating that one of the fellows now in camp, and who had for some time made himself most objectionable by his excessive officiousness, was the man who struck him. Such a chance was not to be lost. I caught William's eye, and quietly told him at all risks to secure the culprit. In a moment he issued his instructions to his subordinates, a moment after he was on his feet with all his followers at his back, and as pretty a little faction fight ensued as ever was witnessed. A big fellow made a dash at me, but the Massara felled him with a yoke-key. Things were now getting rather mixed, and I commenced to fear that I should have to take an active hand in the scrimmage, when fortune decided in our favour by the second driver knocking down the ringleader, and my favourite dog laying hold of another—and sticking to his grip—on the calf of his leg. The yells of fear, and I daresay pain, too, that came from the last individual were heartrending, as well as demoralizing, for instantaneously all beat a hasty retreat, with the exception of the primary cause of the disturbance, who very much against his will remained a prisoner in our hands. I ordered him to be secured to one of the hind waggon wheels, there to remain until I decided what was to be his punishment. I believe the fellow thought that he was going to be killed at the very least, and I know that several of my followers informed him that such would be his inevitable fate. I must acknowledge that big a scoundrel as he inevitably was, he stood the ordeal with such praiseworthy *sang froid* as would inevitably have made him a martyr in a Christian country, if he had been the victim of religious persecution.

By the struggling moonbeam's misty light, aided by two cotton wicks, taken from the skirt of the last of my "Sunday go-to-meeting" shirts, stuck in fat, I took my seat at my table. In front of me stood the prisoner secured with *rheims*, guarded on either side by two of my strongest henchmen, while beside me sat a mixed jury, composed of both my own people and several of the tribesmen of the culprit. The evidence was abundant, and to the point, that he struck the first blow, and by so doing had imperilled the peace and endangered the success of my expedition. The intelligent members (?) at once found a verdict of Guilty. By a slight deviation from the method adopted at home of administering the law I threw the responsibility of the sentence upon the same august body. Among them was much diversity of opinion, a hundred lashes with the jambock being about the mildest award that any were disposed to give for so heinous an offence. I pointed out—I hope with becoming dignity—that justice ought to be tempered with mercy, but in spite of my fervour and eloquence it was a long time before I succeeded in reducing the sentence to ten stripes. Then the prisoner was led outside the camp, made fast to a tree, the foreloper who was injured acting as executioner. When all was ready I lighted some aluminum wire, the blaze from it threw a mysterious, thrilling, but appropriate light upon the scene, and punishment was ordered to commence. William's voice authoritatively counted the strokes correctly, and when the last cut was dealt, not a murmur escaped the lips of the sufferer, although I am certain that the lashes had been laid on with no gentle hand. Not one person, even among his own people, commiserated with the culprit, but, on the other hand, seemed to think the whole affair one of the most pleasant incidents that they had ever witnessed. Half an hour afterwards I discovered the flogged man among a very noisy crowd, of which he appeared the ringleader, stowing away enormous quantities of half-cooked zebra flesh, with an appetite that an alderman would have envied. Is he—such a creature as had just been scourged—is he not a man and a brother? I have often heard philanthropists and missionaries inquire. Do they really mean that this should be answered in the affirmative? Well, perhaps they do, but I would infinitely sooner that they established the relationship than I did.

That night it was resolved to *treck* further to the eastward, to the country where the Massara's people resided. There I was promised plenty of game, an abundance of water, and, better than all, a hearty welcome. There is always lots to do when a fresh start is contemplated, such as greasing axles, fitting new lashes to the whips, and providing yoke-keys in the place of those that may have been lost or broken. The sun was just appearing in the east, when I was awoke by the well-known cry "*feusack*," "*feusack*," uttered and re-uttered with constantly increasing energy, to drive the dogs from under the waggons. I expect the true translation of the word is "get out." Then William's voice was heard, "*Amba! amba! amaga! treck!*" and crack goes the big whip at the instant that the last word was pronounced, and, eastward ho! moved the ships of the desert for fresh pastures that might almost be said to be unexplored.

With regret I bid good-bye to the scene of my late home; never before, or since, or in years to come, will I again see its like, for it was in every respect the *beau ideal* of a camping-ground. It had but one fault, and that was being in the Macalaca country. The next European that visited it no doubt wondered who preceeded him, and had lively memories of home brought back, for I left an assortment of Crosse and Blackwell's, as well as Lazenby's tins and bottles behind, that, had they been refilled, would almost have sufficed to stock a country store. The front *kist* of the leading waggon afforded me a seat throughout the first *treck;* small buck were exceedingly numerous close at hand, while larger antelopes were seldom not to be seen where sufficient grass existed to be an attraction. The second *treck* brought us to pits about sunset. There was an abundance of water in them, but exceedingly difficult to get at. As every drop of the precious fluid required—and that as may be known was not a small supply, from the quantity of beasts I possessed, had to be raised upwards of thirty feet, so my people were kept busy till a very late hour. This was the most liony-looking outspanning place I had ever encountered, and it was so situated that nothing that I could do would make it more secure, if I except keeping up giant fires throughout the darkness. Somehow or other, I had a presentiment of a mishap, so I kept moving about throughout the night, but nought occurred to justify my uneasiness. The cattle were again in their yokes by daylight, and never do I remember to have bid adieu to a camp with greater pleasure. Nor was my dread without cause, for the Massara, soon after starting, pointed out the unmistakable spoor of a family party of lions, that no doubt would have paid us a nocturnal visit, but for the precaution I had taken of keeping up a blaze that made all the surroundings so distinct, that no large animal could possibly have come near without being detected.

The country during the early part of the day was most monotonous and uninteresting; moreover, the sky was lowering and overcast, yet no wind worthy of notice blew; in consequence, the heat was intense and most overpowering. The interior of my waggon was stifling, and the cattle suffered from the weight of the draught, as the sand was touching the spokes almost without intermission; thus I ordered everyone to walk, while I mounted one of the horses. I was attended by a "handy boy" who made himself useful in many ways, without having any special duties. He could speak English fairly well, and had not been spoiled by residing on the verge of civilization; moreover, he was a plucky fellow too, and could use a gun fairly well, so would have been more often in my society than he was, but for the jealousy of William, who appeared to think that when his special duties were over, he had a right to be in personal attendance upon the master.

After quietly riding a few miles, I saw at a distance a "tope" of trees, and, apparently making its way towards it, a very travel-stained, worn-out-looking waggon, the cover of which was much torn, and here and there clumsily patched with large pieces of green hide. Around it were many natives, with a *cortége* of their women, loaded with their babes, bringing up the rear. What surprised me was that there was no sound of whip-cracking, laughter, or grunting and complaining of cattle, or complaining from badly lubricated wheels. My boy looked at it as well as myself. I did not disturb his reveries, whatever they might be, yet I could not help thinking that there was something queer, if not mysterious, in the whole affair, so I resolved to overtake it, and learn who was its owner, whence it went, and whither it had come. With this purpose, I accelerated my pace, taking but small heed of the object of my curiosity, but when I directed my eyes upon it again, it had almost gained the clump of trees. This struck me as curious, for at first they appeared separated by a considerable space; however, their progress might be accounted for by the stranger travelling faster than I supposed. When about three-quarters of a mile from the object of pursuit, it disappeared with all its surroundings. When this took place, I had not had my sight fixed upon it for a minute or two. Although surprised, I consoled myself with the belief that there must be some dip in the *veldt*, into which it had descended, or that the clump of trees was nearer than I supposed, and that it had gained shelter behind them.

Slightly altering the direction I was pursuing, so as to more immediately cut the spoor made by the wheels, I spoke to my boy and asked him to what people he thought the waggon belonged.

In his manner he appeared somewhat nervous, and scarcely the plucky fellow he generally gave you the impression that he was; still he answered, but it was in a hesitating way, "It looks like Kaffir's, or Griqua's, but I do not think that it is waggon at all. If it was waggon, the people would have stopped to speak to us."

"Then what in the name of goodness is it?" I exclaimed, rather crossly.

"Bass! I don't know; never seen the like before. Devil's waggon, perhaps!"

"Devil's, be hanged! Come, hurry up, we'll soon strike the trail, and soon after will find out to whom the old rattletrap belongs. Come, be smart!"

But the boy was not smart: he came on, but most unwillingly, and therefore slowly, making it evident that if he dared he would have disobeyed my orders, so I quickened my pace, and left him to follow at his will.

Although I rode on so as to cut the trail at right angles, and the sand was heavy, therefore most amenable to the impression made by wheels, not a vestige of spoor could I discover. Still I was not satisfied, but hurried to the "tope" of mimosa trees; nothing there was to be seen, in fact, there was no hiding-place in it, the cover being too small to screen a single horseman, let alone a great lumbering waggon.

I acknowledge that I was disconcerted, in truth I felt so, for the affair was so unexpected, that for some minutes I could not realize what it meant. That it was anything supernatural, I do not for a moment think that I had a suspicion, yet that I had seen the *cortége* was indisputable, and where was it now?

A very practical, hard-headed Scotchman and I had been fooled by the mirage: seeing water and miniature waves, we believed in them, when we knew that they could not there exist. On that occasion we vowed that such could never take place again, and here I was as much humbugged as the veriest novice in wild African life could have been. The optical delusion was so perfect that not for a moment did a suspicion enter my mind of it not being a reality, and this unquestionably was the cause that I was so easily deluded. If such an experience had taken place immediately after sunset or on a moonlight night, how possible would it have been for an uneducated person to assert that they had seen something supernatural. As it was, my follower was convinced that he had, and made converts of the whole retinue of servants, who, open-mouthed and awe-stricken, sat over the watch-fire to a very late hour, still discussing the smallest details, or asking fresh questions relative to the mysterious apparition.

I believe my horse was quite as much deceived as I was myself, for when I entered the clump of trees, he looked about as if expecting every moment to view something that he anticipated was close at hand, he even whinnied, a thing, I may say, he almost never did, except when returning to camp and his companions. This trifling occurrence even the boy noticed, and made it a very strong point in bringing the others to the decision that it could be nothing else but a devil's waggon.

Next morning was clear and delightfully fresh. Soon after *inspanning*, we crossed over a swell of ground from which extended a very obvious descent. The whole country from here underwent a strange revolution in appearance, grass and bush became again abundant, trees numerous, while in the middle distance rose detached *copjes*, the sides of which were shrouded in a dense covering of innumerable vegetable growths. The change was a complete transformation, almost as much so as jumping from Rannoch Moor or Black Mount to the valley of the Thames. This doubtless was all due to the difference of altitude and a greater abundance of water near the surface of the soil. It seemed interminable, the time that was occupied in gaining the vicinity of these miniature hills, but at length the desired end was accomplished, but not before my patience was nearly exhausted.

Ox-waggon travelling is admissible when no other means of progression can be obtained, but it is terribly slow, terribly trying, and terribly disappointing. It suits Boers and natives who know not the value of time, and so never are in a hurry; but to a European, or more especially to a Yankee, it simply is heartbreaking.

But the reward that had to be laboured for so hard was assuredly grand compensation, for the like to what I now gazed upon I never saw before; to describe the scene I will try, but I doubt if any writer could do it justice. From an unusually green and level plain sprang up innumerable detached *copjes*, many reaching to an altitude of three hundred feet. Their outlines were as dissimilar as it would be possible to imagine, yet all were composed of innumerable gigantic pieces of silvery grey stone, that looked as if they had been hewn out by man's art. But what manner of men could they be that performed such gigantic work? To veritable Titans alone could such labour be possible. To my mind the heaps looked like *débris* remaining after a huge city had been constructed, or what might be left of immense structures, after it had been rended to pieces by a terrible up-heaval of the earth. It looked utterly impossible to think that some kind of human beings had no hand in cutting, shaping and fashioning those flat and right-angle cornered stones; but if so, how could they have been transported to where they reposed? for as far as I could judge no similar description of stone is to be found except in these *copjes*. The base of the first that I reached was so densely covered and bound together by vegetable growth, that I could not reach the substance that formed the primary support, but when I climbed up one hundred or more feet, these mammoth stones, as I imagined, lay apparently one upon the other, and showed no indication of having ever been attached. My intrusion was soon observed by a large party of baboons. So angrily did they bark and menace me, that it was obvious they were ignorant of the deadly effects of fire-arms. If I am not wrong in my surmises, the beautiful spotted leopard is here also far from scarce.

Another day's journey to the southward of east took us through an equally attractive country. It was the perfection of park-like scenery, the timber being exceedingly varied, always growing in picturesque clumps, while the open land bore a fine crop of dark green healthy grass of the most succulent and refreshing description. The latter my oxen thought at least, for it required considerable coercion to get the sturdy beasts along through it without tasting its excellence.

Game paths existed in every direction, but all seemed to trend in the direction that we were pursuing. About 4 p.m. I saw a small party of storks, they were taking life easy and resting in idle contentment. This indicated a *vley*, and in half an hour more I was upon its margin. The soil that edged this pond was an index to a volume of natural history, for the spoor of every variety of small or large game to be found in South Africa was to be seen imprinted upon it, from the elephant's and giraffe's to the otter's and ichneumon's. The naturalist and sportsman who have not had the facilities of travelling thus far into the bowels of the land, would scarcely believe it possible that such a vast natural menagerie could exist in one locality. Sir Cornwallis Harris and Gordon Cumming, enthusiasts as they were, could never have seen anywhere in their researches for game, a proof positive of its existence, to surpass the tell-tale map that was now before me. His majesty the king of beasts' track appeared so well represented in the sticky soil, that I resolved to have a kraal erected around the waggons, and before the termination of a glorious sunset this was accomplished, but fortunately it was not required. At midnight I turned out to see that the camp-fires had been supplied liberally with fuel, when my ears were greeted with music dear to the hunter's soul. The beasts that produced most of these sounds I was conversant with; but every now and again a strange note would be heard, that forced me to seek for information from one of the attendants.

I love the baboon's deep challenge note, it is so earnest, sonorous, and manly, and doubtless is as well understood by its fellows as we understand each other. How many words they have in their language it would be impossible to say, but whether they be few or numerous, I am fully convinced that they talk to each other. The bushmen are of my belief on this point, and always appeared to pity my ignorance when I expressed any scepticism on the subject.

At an early hour I was in the saddle, for the meat of a cow giraffe was required, and that I was resolved to have if possible. My fleetest horse was selected for my mount, and never did he seem to carry himself more gallantly. His heart truly seemed to be in his work, and a kind or cheering word made the affectionate beast arch his lovely neck more gracefully, or press upon his bit as if desirous of proving his speed and endurance. At 9 a.m. I descried the game that I sought. By keeping a *copje* between me and it, I could easily get within a hundred yards of the quarry. Soon this space was traversed, and I dismounted to fire. A fat cow was the nearest of the little *coterie*, and I am not ashamed to own, that great were the qualms of conscience that I felt in taking the beautiful creature's life, but food, human food, was wanted, so the inferior creature of the brute creation must die, to supply the requisite that enables man to live. Both barrels of my 10-bore—loaded with spherical bullets, and 7 drams of powder—delivered their charges in rapid succession. The wounded creature reeled for a moment, then pulled herself together, and was soon in rapid pursuit of her companions. In an instant afterwards I was in my saddle, and the pursuit began. Never was I carried better; the pace was terrific, and soon laid me alongside my prey. The ground still seemed admirably adapted for galloping, but I soon found this was erroneous, for it was perfectly honey-combed with meerkat burrows. To avoid one of the former I pulled my mount closer to the giraffe than was prudent, when the cow gave my gallant little horse a kick with her nigh hind hoof, that sent us both in one indistinguishable heap to the ground. I soon picked myself up, not so my favourite, for his off fore leg was broken immediately below the knee.

There was nothing to be done, but to take the life of my darling, for no human skill could now aid him. It was a terrible resource, but an imperative one, so the bullet that was intended to kill the giraffe was destined to take the life of as brave, fleet, and affectionate a beast as ever I threw a leg over.

On that day I had better draw a veil, for when I got home, worn out and sick of heart, bad news awaited me.

I even now wonder how I retained my reason when I had learned the misadventures I had suffered. Every effort to compose myself was futile, for it appeared to me as if Providence had marked me out as a special victim for her displeasure. But what was the second mishap? I can well imagine the reader asking. It was this. During my absence, and contrary to my orders, the foreloper, to save himself trouble, had turned my other horse out to pasture ; half an hour afterwards it returned to the waggons, which it had scarcely reached when it fell down to rise no more. While grazing it had been bitten by a "*mamba*," immediately over the jugular vein. This snake is one of the most deadly reptiles to be found in all South Africa, whether it is equally so with the cobra of India, my experience does not justify me in deciding. Of this, however, I am certain, that I never knew of a man or beast recovering that had the virus of this reptile injected into it.

Thus in one day had my costly expedition been shipwrecked, for without horses I could not supply my people with food. A return to civilization was forced upon me, and I believe my unfeeling followers gloried in my misfortunes. But after all, they are but children of nature, only differing from the educated and christianized by being a trifle less selfish, and more grateful for kindnesses bestowed upon them. The retreat was rather a mournful procession, and only marked by two incidents, viz., by being kept up all night by a party of lions, which seemed resolved at any cost to obtain one of my bullocks. The steadiness of my cattle, and the pluck of my "boys" intimidated the assailants till sunrise, when the marauding crew thought it expedient to retire. The other event was such an unexpected incident, that it deserves a place among my records of field sports.

My head driver set a steel trap with the hope of catching a hyæna. Towards morning we heard in the direction that the gin was placed the most violent thumping, spitting and snarling. The dogs, encouraged by our presence, unanimously rushed forth to learn the cause of the unusual disturbance.

A mature leopard, but of rather small size, was in the trap. In a moment the whole pack was upon the cat. The spotted beauty fought a most determined battle, but it was obvious from the commencement of the struggle, that it was sorely hampered in its activity by the clog that grasped its thigh. Nevertheless, ten minutes elapsed before the fight was terminated, and in that brief time two of my best dogs were killed. Of course I tried to shoot the foe, but I could not get a chance to do so, without imperilling the life of one or other of my favourites. The result of this *rencontre* is not a precedent to be followed, for the leopard laboured under unusual disadvantages. But for the trap, I am convinced Master "Spots" would have accomplished his escape and left more of his enemies *hors de combat.*

When I reached Linikani, I found that nothing but wars and rumours of wars exercised the minds of the adjoining white community, so I hurried south to offer my services, and, if accepted, once more to wear the uniform of my Queen and country.

A BEAR ADVENTURE.

A GOOD deal has lately been written upon Indian bears; I would draw the attention of the reader to far more interesting animals. This preference or favouritism I have arrived at after a long acquaintance with the different species of both countries, and all such sportsmen as have had similar advantages as myself unanimously agree with me in thinking as I do.

When the United States was a colony of Great Britain, and during the subsequent war of 1812, when our troops were constantly employed on outpost duty—often far beyond civilization—very many were the adventures that our sentries had with Bruin, some ludicrous and others serious, the results of which were that the black bear was considered a very dangerous beast to interfere with, and a very amusing as well as wise brute if left alone.

When I first visited North America my greatest ambition was to shoot a bear, so I sought such localities as these animals were known to be plentiful in; thus I soon made acquaintance with the game I longed for, one of the *rencontres* with which I will take from my diary,

In following a flight of ruffed grouse, which had flushed so far beyond range as to prevent my getting a shot at them, I came across a perfect brake of wild grapes. I could not withstand the temptation of halting for a feed, for they had been touched with frost, which changes them from the most unpalatable to the most delightful fruit.

The day had been warm for the end of autumn, and I suppose the fatigue of my tramp, together with the delightful shade afforded by the adjacent trees, induced me to lie down, and, as might be expected under the circumstances, I fell asleep. How long I had been in a state of oblivion I cannot say, but I was awoke by my companion—a mongrel terrier—barking vociferously at some intruder. After a stretch, a yawn, and the usual awakening action, I turned in the direction of my dog, to learn what on earth had raised his ire and disturbed my siesta, when, to my astonishment, I beheld a large bear erect, pulling down the vines not twenty yards off, ignorant of my presence, but occasionally casting a furtive glance back at his angry assailant, who took precious good care to keep beyond arm's length. Men become cool in such situations, either from experience or the power of controlling their feelings. My gun lay at my side loaded with No. 6 shot. If Bruin found me out and became aggressive at close quarters, say eight or ten yards, I was prepared to risk the issue ; but if the beast would only move off a little way, still keeping to windward, I thought I would improve my opportunity by substituting a brace of bullets. Under any circumstances my gun would be required, so watching the first chance when the bear's back was turned, I brought my double barrel close by my side. Many may laugh when I say that I did not feel nervous ; but I did not: on the other hand, I remained watching with great pleasure the enjoyment that my foe appeared to take in crunching up whole bunches of the luscious fruit. As the bear worked further from me my dog became less demonstrative, only occasionally giving vent to his feelings by a suppressed growl.

A change of ammunition was soon effected, and afterwards a word of encouragement sent the terrier in pursuit of Bruin. Soon I knew the game had been "nipped," for I heard a rush, and the cur retreated in full haste towards me, with the bear in hot pursuit. The game now, for the first time, saw me, and evidently not liking my appearance, turned to make off, but the courageous little dog was soon once more at the foe's heels, and as I cheered him to the attack, never lost an opportunity of pinching his enemy's stern, which caused him "to tree" to avoid further persecution. By the time I came up Bruin had gained the first fork, not twenty feet overhead, so is it to be wondered at, that, at such short range and not a twig intervening, one barrel brought the bear to the ground in the agonies of death ?

CURIOUS BELIEFS REGARDING SNAKES.

A COMMUNICATION to me upon the above subject, and signed "Baralong"—a deservedly honoured name in South Africa, a record of courage and devotion—is full of interest to many, more especially to those that are affected with a passion for mysterious subjects.

In that charmingly-written work, "Elsie Venner," by Oliver Wendell Holmes, the author of the justly popular "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," will be found a strange story, in which rattlesnakes take a dominant part. To condense it I will endeavour:—In the suburbs of a western town in the New England States a beautiful girl lived with her father and an old coloured nurse. She had been motherless since infancy, her maternal parent having died immediately after her birth. Before the lady's confinement she had been frightened by a rattlesnake, the result of which was that the child had around her neck a distinct mark, faithfully representing this reptile. As the heroine—Elsie Venner—grew up, care was taken to hide this unsightly disfigurement by covering it with a massive gold necklace. The young lady increased in attractiveness with age, but she was found to possess two distinct characters, one treacherous, vindictive, and spiteful, the other gentle, loving, and womanly. In summer, when snakes are most numerous, she was imbued with the former; in the cold season the latter qualities dominated.

The family doctor, a gentleman of skill and great experience, watched the case with solicitude, and thought that ultimately the one nature would overcome the other, trusting that, as the life of a rattlesnake did not generally exceed twenty years, the reptile disposition would succumb to the human. When Elsie Venner was about coming of age she was taken alarmingly ill, and her recovery despaired of. Some friends and schoolfellows, to lessen the irksomeness of her confinement, sent the invalid a basket of beautiful wild flowers, in which were some leaves and sprigs of white ash, which, when she saw, produced a paroxysm, from which she never recovered.

When a mere boy—little over fifteen—I wandered throughout the United States and Canada for nearly three years. While following this erratic life, I reached Coomer Settlement, in Niagara Co., State of New York, and, during my stay there, I heard the above story told, not in the charming chaste language of Oliver Wendell Holmes, but in sufficiently plain and graphic diction to firmly impress it upon my memory. The explanation about the white ash—not black ash, which is a swamp-loving tree—is that its bark's juice is a certain specific for the bite of a rattlesnake, and the plant's presence detestable to the reptile, so much so that if either the hunter or wanderer be benighted, and so have to camp out, a circle of white ash bark placed round his resting-place, is a certain preventative of his slumbers being disturbed by the intrusion of this unwelcome visitor. The residents of Coomer Settlement were either the original squatters or their descendants, so were invariably great backwoodsmen, and they thoroughly believed in white ash bark being a cure when bitten, by external application in poultice form ; and of security being obtained by a few strips of the bark being distributed around their forest couch.

Near to the above place was a reservation of Tanawanda Indians. The tribe was tolerably numerous in those days, and all of them that I have spoken to had firm faith in the efficacy of white ash bark.

In early days of colonization, this part of Western New York, also of many of the adjoining States, was literally overrun with rattlesnakes, but the introduction of the omnivorous feeding hog, soon reduced their numbers. In a cave discovered in Rattlesnake Hill, near Coomer Settlement, and also in several similar places near the popular summer resort of Baden, Southern Indiana, I saw bushels of rattlesnake bones. Why these reptiles should assemble in such cavities, and there resign their lives, is a question that I have never seen elucidated.

There are two distinct species of the rattlesnake to be found in the United States, the timber and the prairie. It is of the first that I have been writing, the other—familiarly known by the red-men as massasawga—is very numerous in the prairie country, its usual length is about eighteen inches, while its colour is a dusky brown black. Its bite, although very painful, is seldom fatal, and large doses of whiskey, administered freely, will soon give relief to either man or quadruped.

The picture of the hoop-snake, which "Baralong" alludes to, I saw on the confines of Parish, when on my way from Friedel-ford to Rhinoster Sprint. It was painted by the well-known explorer, mineralogist, and artist, Mr. Baines, who did more for the colony of the Cape of Good Hope than any man of his day. He was the first to discover gold in that country ; but the wise men of his generation laughed with scorn when he told them of its existence within easy access of their frontier. The Cape Town Museum possesses several specimens of the productions of this gentleman's brush, and Mr. White, a wealthy Port Elizabeth merchant, owns quite a gallery of them. They are very clever but rather crude, but this is scarcely to be wondered at when we consider the protracted, wild, dangerous, and exposed life he led.

The hoop-snake I have also heard of in Southern India and the Malay Archipelago, both countries which in former days were subject to the influences of the Dutch East India Company. In Batavia, a guest of my host—an up-country planter—spoke so familiarly of this reptile, that I thought of course he had seen it, but he had not, although numbers of his friends and servants had. Perhaps "Baralong's" letter will bring forth a man who has been witness of a hoop-snake in full pursuit, for since the sea-serpent has ceased to give a periodical exhibition, something snaky is wanted to stir us all up.

The puff-adder of South Africa is not only a very deadly serpent, but a very repulsive one. I do not think that it is generally known that it does not strike forwards, but sideways, or nearly backwards. Among the settlers, traders, and natives, a belief is dominant that the female of this race only produces one family, for the reason that the young release themselves from captivity by eating their way into the world through their mother's stomach. Several white and black men have asserted that they have witnessed this occurrence, having been called to where it was taking place by the lamentable and heart-rending cries of the unhappy parent (?). I should not like to doubt the veracity of old friends, but until I see the episode take place, I fear that I shall remain sceptical, for the reason that I am convinced that when the young of the puff-adder are in a very early stage, after they have become acquainted with an independent existence from their producer, they will, if alarmed, seek security in the parent's inside.

Snakes have long afforded abundant food for all kinds of curious surmises, some of which are doubtless very absurd. I trust, however, that my readers will not place my last statement among that number.

SPORT FOR MODERATE OUTLAY.

WHEN, nearly twenty-one years ago, I wrote a book designated "Accessible Field Sports," in which I described my experiences of shooting and fishing in the Rocky Mountains, many of our facetious critics jeered at the name that I had selected, and handled my task roughly, on account of what they considered the absurdity of the title. One gentleman went so far as to say that the appellation would be quite as suitable to the North Pole and the unexplored regions that surround it; but how shortsighted and egotistical did these untravelled *littérateurs* prove themselves, for now, yes, and for some years past, there is scarcely a man of leisure and means, whether peer or commoner, that has not wet a line in the brawling streams or pellucid lakes that stud that grand picturesque region familiarly known as the Rockies, or made its echoes ring again and again with the often repeated report of his gun or rifle.

On this occasion I do not desire my readers to wander so far from home as I did when I wrote "Accessible Field Sports," and, yet, if they will obey my instructions—provided always that they be of the proper sort—they will have opportunities of enjoyment that are not often offered.

Early autumn is the season to prepare for your trip; therefore hurry is not needful, for you have ample time before you to get ready for your outing, as it is unnecessary that you should turn your back on

Albion, and adopt the motto of "Westward Ho!" for quite four months to come. Thus you can take your time to select your rods, tackle, and firearms, and not be compelled to accept what avaricious or ignorant tradesmen choose to thrust upon you. I can assert that there is nothing so conducive to the thorough enjoyment of a distant excursion as having exactly the outfit that you require; nothing, on the other hand, to militate more against your pleasure than the reverse. A badly-balanced, indifferent-shooting gun is an abomination at all times, but infinitely more detestable to be saddled with, where money cannot obtain another. The same may be with equal justice said of a rod, for one that is too heavy, too long, too whippy, or too stiff will soon turn the most delightful recreation into the most arduous toil. Moreover, the possession of such abominations as alluded to, is certain sooner or later to affect your temper, when adieu to all chance or prospect of future comfort, and of the good fellowship and harmony that are absolutely necessary if your expedition is to be a success.

The tour that I am about to lay before you does not require a great outlay of money, for economical persons, I have little doubt, could accomplish it—particularly if there are two—for about one pound sterling or five dollars per day each from the date that they sailed from a British port until the time that they returned to it, and yet live comfortably, and have all the sport that is desired. However, it must be remembered that all play and no work is not to be anticipated, for there will be times when you will have to put your shoulder to the wheel, although those times will not be of frequent occurrence. But, then, this ought to signify nothing to my young countrymen, for after all that can be said, it is only a taste of the bitter, which will make the sweets more enjoyable by contrast.

To the fishing I will first allude, as it is to be had earlier in the season, and therefore will be the first sport obtained.

Betake yourself to Quebec, which is best reached direct from the Clyde. Eight or nine days' steaming, in all probability, will terminate your voyage, and place you on shore under the frowning batteries of the ancient citadel. This should be made for a time the base of your operations. There are many keen sportsmen among the citizens of the "Gibraltar of the West," and better than all, they are the very essence of hospitality. At the Russell House in the old town, the proprietor—who managed matters there in my day—was a genial host and good fisherman, always willing to give a helping hand to advance the pleasures of the angler. Many of this hotel's patrons were ardent wielders of the rod, and very important information could be obtained from them. I remember well a *sanctum* in this caravansary, over some "hot and strong," obtaining a perfect mine of useful hints about my future proceedings. Such a haunt doubtless exists now, and the freemasonry of the gentle craft will, without doubt, open the portals that would be closed to the *omnium gatherum* of every-day life.

Get acquainted also with some of the Hudson Bay Company's people, as a rule a thorough good sort, who are as conversant with every lake and river, mountain range and stretch of barren land as a Cockney is with the suburbs of London. Of course, if you can obtain introductions to some of the important citizens—especially those engaged in the lumber trade—matters will be much simplified, but with letters or without them, if you follow the instructions about to be given, you cannot fail to obtain any amount of the finest sport.

Those rivers in the immediate vicinity of Quebec, such as the Montmorency and Lorette, give a wide berth to, for although they hold some splendid trout, they are not in sufficient quantities to recompense an angler that has crossed the Atlantic to fish. In other words, they are "flogged out."

If sea trout fishing be desired—and you are at the first base of operations—proceed to Tadousac, north of the river Saguenay. This is some distance below Quebec. From there, all along the north coast of the St. Lawrence, wherever a stream or rivulet flows into it, you may have such sport with this gamest and most beautiful of fish as you never contemplated before, or are you likely to obtain again in any other part of the world.

Norway, excellent as it is for fishing purposes, is simply not in it as regards the taking of this prince of the *Salmonidæ* family. The Hon. Robert Roosvelt, late United States Minister at the Hague, has written a very charming book, in which his experiences of where I write of, are recounted. The work is full of information on every subject interesting to the visitor. It is well worth procuring, and any London publisher with a connection in New York can get it for you.

Having said so much, let the traveller retrace his steps to Quebec with the intention of visiting the country north of it, which abounds in lakes and rivers, many of which can be seen from the train. After passing River à Pierre, nearly sixty miles from the capital, an absolutely unbroken wilderness lies before you, covering an area of over 15,000 square miles, and through it, wherever you direct your steps, will be discovered waters abundantly stocked with trout and char of different species. Lake St. John, from whence the river Saguenay takes its source, is well supplied with land-locked salmon, white fish, and coarser species, but Lake Edward, which is south from the last mentioned, with all its numerous feeders, is to be described as simply a grand trout water. The scenery surrounding this lake is charming, innumerable islands of every size and shape dot its surface, while the endless forests of birch, pine, spruce and cedar give a fragrance to the fresh, cool air that almost acts as a stimulant. From this sequestered spot, sometimes within a mile, seldom more than three, are dozens of lakelets, from which such quantities of *Salmo fontinalis* and brown trout can be taken in a day, that it will take one man as much as he can do to carry them to camp over a two-mile portage.

The Lawrentian Hills, north of Quebec, are also well deserving of a visit, and if this trip should be made late in the year an abundance of all North America's largest and finest game will be found, from moose and bears to grouse and hares.

Lake St. Joseph's, twenty-five miles north of Quebec, is also worthy the attention of the angler. Here there is a fairly good hotel, where boats can be obtained. To go on enumerating lakes and rivers swarming with the finest descriptions of fish might not be impossible, but it would take space that can ill be afforded. However, here is a fishing demesne of unlimited extent, stocked to repletion, free to all, and yet from its very vastness almost certain of being without strangers to intrude upon your solitude. He that wants more would be difficult to satisfy; he that objects not to camp life, and the roughing incidental to it, will enjoy such sport that can only be approached to in Europe, and then only by those that possess a millionaire's purse.

When you have spent a month or more in this elysium, if such a course please the visitor, pack up your traps and proceed further westward to Toronto, then north to Orillia, on Lake Couchachin, at the head of Lake Simcoe. All this journey can be made by rail. Make Orillia—a very pleasant and pretty village—your base of operations for this country.

Although good fishing is to be found within easy access in every direction, I should advise the wanderer to push on at once to Gravenhurst, the entrance to the Muskoka region. In it there are eight hundred sheets of water of all shapes and sizes, and a proportionate number of rivers and brooks. The whole region not only abounds with *Salmonidæ* of different species, but also with large game. The weather here in September and October is simply "grand," and the scenery magnificent. If the traveller should remain here late enough in the fall of the year, excellent wild-fowl shooting can also be had. There is one great advantage in this region, you can go almost anywhere by water without the trouble of crossing portages, and, therefore, having to carry your effects from one lake or river to another.

I spent almost a year here before the country was as accessible as it is now, and I never enjoyed life better. Moose, bears, and carriboo I found very plentiful and the few Indians that I came across were most friendly and obliging. Of course a guide, or guides, will be required in both these parts of Canada. In the lower Province a French Canadian might be found the most useful person to employ, but in Ontario by all means try and secure Indians. There can scarcely be any difficulty in doing this, as there are plenty of Chippewas knocking about all the frontier settlements. Their adroitness in handling canoes cannot fail to elicit admiration, and their knowledge of the habits of game, and success in finding it is really wonderful. However, they have their drawbacks, but these you will not discover unless you give them whisky, when they will become very apparent. Make a rule, to be broken under no circumstances, viz., that spirits are to be kept for ever out of their reach.

Although many of the Indians are passably good cooks, the minutiæ and details of your culinary arrangements had better be done by yourself. I do not recommend taking a tent upon such outings, as you cannot travel too light, and wherever you go your guides can make you a splendid camp in half an hour, including a bed far surpassing anything but the present style of spring mattress.

Figuratively, you cannot have too many blankets with you, all of which should be of a dark colour. A waterproof ground sheet is indispensable, and a gossamer waterproof sheet will, in case of rain, be found a great comfort. All these, as well as your clothing, should be carried in waterproof bags, that denominated "the ubique" being the handiest.

Having fished and shot to your heart's content, get out of the wilderness as quickly as possible, and make your way to Omaha, Nebraska, within a few hours' journey of which you will obtain some of the finest pinnated grouse (*Tetrao cupido*) and Virginian partridge (*Ortyx Virginianus*) shooting to be found on the continent of North America. However, if you cannot hire or borrow a dog, you will be placed at an immense disadvantage. At this season, in this locality, you will also be able to enjoy very good duck and snipe shooting, although the time may not have come for the immense flocks of migratory birds to arrive from the north. Accommodation can always be had at farmhouses, where, although the cooking may be a little rough, comfortable and clean apartments can be obtained, also, in all probability, a team and light road waggon, to enable you to visit distant "marches." The farmers, with very few exceptions, are most hospitable, and, as a rule, well educated and prosperous. A letter of credit upon the nearest bank, or upon some influential storekeeper in the neighbourhood, will prove to be a most useful letter of introduction. In fact, all over the world such an indication that you possess the sinews of war is a talisman that cannot be surpassed. I do not mean from this that you should make an ostentatious parade of your wealth: quite the reverse, for it will soon leak out without your assistance that you have got it, and, probably, very much more than you possess.

After having had "a good time" in Nebraska, which it certainly will be your own fault if you have not, supposing the season to have so far advanced as to be the commencement of November, make a fresh start to the eastward, and catch the first train passing the nearest local station on the Atchison, Topeka, and Sante Fé Railway, book yourself to Carthage, and from it you had better proceed to White Oaks in Lincoln county.

This part of the journey will be found rather rough, and has to be performed by hired conveyance. On the plains in the vicinity, especially those to the south-east, are to be found immense quantities of antelope (*Antelocapra Americana*), animals about the size of our fallow deer. Around Lincoln and Fort Sumner this description of shooting is particularly good. As these flats are much intersected by arroyas and watercourses, stalking within easy range of the game is not difficult, if due attention be paid to the wind.

A guide is here necessary, for the country is so much alike in general *contour* that the novice is almost certain to lose himself. If you should chance to come across any of the Mexican population, they will be found most hospitable, payment for food or shelter being a thing they never dream of demanding. However, to everyone you must be most courteous, for all, whether rich or poor, believe that they possess in their veins a large amount of the blood of the Hidalgos of old Spain. About twenty miles from Las Vegas, in San Miguel county, are several lakes, called Los Alamos, a district frequented by untold numbers of swans, geese, and ducks, while wild cats, pumas, bears, and white-tailed deer (*cervus Virginianus*) are abundant in the adjoining mountains. Wapiti (*cervus Canadensis*), familiarly called "elk" by the inhabitants, are also to be found, but not in such numbers as further to the north.

A trip that I particularly recommend to sportsmen is to start from Las Vegas, follow the Mora road to Roclada, a distance of twenty-six miles, along which there is fair accommodation, and they will be very unfortunate if they do not secure bears and deer. Turkeys, grouse, and woodcock are also plentiful, while trout of great size, gameness, and excellence are to be captured in all the mountain streams.

Camping out must be here adopted, when a covered waggon or tent would be absolutely necessary. Wherever taverns are found, living is wonderfully cheap, say about four shillings a day, and with the game killed, it will be the sportsman's fault if good and varied meals are not obtained. To advise a trip to New Mexico appears to people at home somewhat like recommending a visit to another planet; but it is no such thing, for it should be remembered that when there you are always within three days' journey of New York and ten of England, with regular postal communication to all parts of civilization.

To return eastward proceed to St. Louis, Mo., thence by the Ohio and Mississippi R. R. to Cincinnati, then by Baltimore and Ohio to the seaport first mentioned. At any of the leading hotels in that busy haunt of commerce you will be able to learn where the best wildfowl shooting is at the time obtainable, as these erratic birds frequently change their haunts for no conceivable purpose that obtuse humanity can conceive. However, I will give a list of places that I have made my temporary home, and where good sport is certain to be had, more especially if the temperature is low and in close vicinity to freezing point.

First, Devil's Island, a hundred miles or thereabouts down the Chesapeake Bay. Here board and lodging will cost about one pound sterling per week. Close by is Tangier Sound and Archipelago, a wonderful place for canvas-back ducks, red-heads, bald-pates, and especially wild geese. Within a few miles is the mussle-hole, particularly favoured by fowl in north-east winds. In this locality you cannot get on without hiring a canoe, unwieldly-looking crafts of great length, but splendid sea-boats when properly handled. I have been out in them when a look over the gunwale would almost entail your loose locks being dragged from your head and taken to leeward at express speed. Their light draught eminently fits them for duck shooting; however, nervous men had better avoid them. A companion of mine, who, I believe, never addressed "the Deity" in his life since he had been breeched, for his time had always been more than fully occupied by his club, dress, and the fashionable side of Piccadilly, prayed so earnestly and wept so copiously at the prospect of being upset, that I almost thought that it was a pity that he did not get drowned there and then; for he never was likely to depart from this life in a more penitent mood.

Albemarle Sound, Alligator Bay, Currituck Sound, and the head waters of the Pasqotauk river can all be reached from Norfolk, Virginia, a few hours off by water, where wildfowl of every description float in myriads, and in hard and boisterous weather are quite accessible. Here also a boat or canoe, with a guide, are indispensable, but the charges for both are not exorbitant. A single-barrelled 4-bore, weighing about 12 lbs., will be found most useful here, but no weapon that cannot be shot from the shoulder is permitted to be used upon these waters. Hence, home to Southampton is a matter of eight or nine days, and the passage should not be the least enjoyable of the trip, if pleasure is to be found in pleasant companions, a good table, and journeying in a well-found ship.

In conclusion, the firearms that I should take would be a 10-bore 26 in. barrelled hammerless double gun, and a ·450 Winchester carbine. A light and strong fly-trout rod about 10½ ft. long, also a double-handed fly-rod, about 16 ft. in length (the first provided with fifty yards of line, the last with a hundred), is all that is absolutely necessary in that department, although a trolling rod might be added with advantage. A gaff and landing-net are necessities that must not be forgotten.

LURES.—Phantom minnows and spoon-baits should be the same as those used in Scotland. Very small trout flies are useless, the smaller sizes of sea-trout flies, as a rule, being the most killing. At Quebec excellent and suitable supplies of these can be obtained. I would also advise the visitor taking an ample supply of loose gut, spare hooks of different sizes, shoemakers' wax, and good tying silk. Before leaving the subject I would add that the residents on the shores of Virginia and North Carolina are a most noble and hospitable race of people, worthy descendants of the Cavaliers, and will remind the visitor of what our yeomen were in the good old days he has read of. Being an Englishman, is an introduction to them, and will be a sufficient warranty for them to try to obtain for the stranger the very best sport to be got.

It is said that when two eminent politicians were travelling through this section of country, one said to the other, "What is this country good for?" The answer he received was "To breed presidents," and the earlier history of the country proves the truth of this. Do as I advise, and the step will not be regretted.

BLACK BASS.

A VERY early American naturalist, by name De Kalb, christened this fish *Perka Negropans*, and though more modern ones have given it different synonyms, still I prefer the first.

In advocating the introduction of American *Salmonidæ*, I feel I have not yet performed my work; bear with me further, and grant me space to advocate the cause of another stranger that, in my opinion, deserves the favourable attention of all admirers of the gentle art. Although I love the dog and gun, still I am equally devoted to the rod. Every season has its own beauties and peculiar fascination, and so has every variety of field sports. On a glorious September day, what can exceed the pleasure of following a brace of well-trained, well-bred, high-couraged dogs over golden stubbles? On a mild spring morning, with a soft south-west breeze and dark clouds overhead, can anything be more delightful than following the tortuous course of a trout brook, taking from pool or stream the speckled beauties, or knee-deep in a rapid, boisterous river, first rising, now hooking, and perchance killing, the glorious salmon? The whirr of pheasant or partridge is pleasant music; the voice of hounds is not less so; but the screech of your reel, when first you are fast in a heavy game fish, is a song that even Patti herself cannot rival. For fish to be popular among fishermen it must have three requisites—viz., gameness when hooked, boldness in feeding, and, when it has yielded its life, be a fit feast for an epicure. All these requisites I can claim for black bass, and, therefore, presume to advocate its claim for introduction to our numerous rivers. There is no portion of the world so intersected by streams and lakes as the North American continent, and in nearly all those, from the Atlantic seaboard to the Missouri river, and from Northern Canada to the tributaries of the Mississippi, the black bass is to be found. It matters not whether it be stream or lake, whether the water be clear or muddy, stagnant or rapid; in all it appears equally to flourish. What splendid homes we could offer it here! All our ornamental waters, though generally unsuited to trout, would be retreats eminently fitted to its nature; and the fisherman, instead of capturing such common, pluckless fish as bream, tench, carp or even perch, would have an antagonist that would test all his skill, the stoutness and endurance of his tackle, with that untiring, unflinching resolution and headstrong energy which no other fresh-water fish of the same size possesses.

The black bass is an extremely free feeder, and is caught in all the various ways used to capture trout. It rises freely at the fly; with minnow or worm, crawfish, spoon-bait, or almost any artificial device, it can be taken. On being hooked, generally the first effort it makes for freedom is to spring from the water. Look out, Mr. Angler; dip your rod in courtesy to it, for if you neglect the requisite *salaam*, your acquaintance will probably terminate. When this device has failed, with a purpose and force alike surprising, it makes a rush for parts unknown, and not until every effort, every trick is put in practice, that is known to the fish family, can you get the slightest chance to use your landing net. I have frequently, after a long and fierce struggle, been about to place the net under it, but the movement was enough; though apparently exhausted, the fish took a new lease of life, and a further trial of patience was demanded before I could call the prize my own. In shape the black bass much resembles a well-fed trout, but is deeper and thicker made, while the tail is remarkable for its breadth. Their weight varies from 1 lb. to 5 lbs., yet, on the Niagara river, near the village of Chippawa, I captured a splendid fellow, quite 8 lbs.; but I was then assured that I had reason to congratulate myself, for fish of such a size were far from common. The colour, as in all varieties of this fish, varies much. In clear running water they are generally a very dark green upon the back (much such a shade as the darker hues in mackerel), gradually getting lighter, almost to white, as you approach the abdomen; but in those southern waters which are strongly impregnated with alluvial deposit, and consequently turbid, the back of these bass is less brilliant in shade, while the stomach is not so clear a white. A still further advantage that may recommend them is, that they are in season when trout should not be killed. In spring they spawn, the exact time varying in different waters, on account of season and position as to latitude.

If I may judge from the quantity of spawn the female contains, they must be immensely prolific, for, although the individual ovum is small, the roe is very large in proportion to the bulk of the fish. From my own observation and inquiries I believe that the spawn is from sixteen to twenty days in maturing, after being deposited, which would give ample time for its transportation across the Atlantic. I am further of opinion that, indiscriminately, all reeds and lilies on a soil bottom are selected on which to attach the eggs; for many of the rivers and ponds in which I have captured this bass flowed through or were situated in deep bottom lands, where a stone, even as large as a pebble would be difficult to find. One pond in Southern

Illinois I particularly remember. It covered a space of about thirty acres, with an average depth of about three feet, except in the southern extremity, where about eight feet of water could be found. The bottom was entirely composed of mud, yet this pond swarmed with black bass. Lake Champlain, the St. Lawrence, and Lake Ontario (as all who have visited these regions will remember) are remarkably clear, with gravelly or rocky bottom, and each is a favourite haunt of this fish. I mention this, to prove the better how universal a favourite, and extensive its adoption might become.

A friend, once a resident of the Isle of Skye, and a well-known successful trout and salmon fisherman, had a beautiful little lake, about ten acres in extent, on his estate, not many miles from Toronto, which he had stocked with black bass. In a few years their numbers were so much increased that in an hour or two, trolling of an evening, a dozen or more could easily be taken. This lake had neither outlet nor inlet, but was supplied with water from springs in the bottom.

I fear it will almost be deemed heresy to place this fish on a par with the trout—at least, some such idea I had, when I first heard the two compared—but I am bold, and will go further. I consider it is the superior of the two, for it is equally good as an article of food, and much stronger and untiring in its efforts to escape when hooked.

By all means let us have black bass introduced. I feel confident this fish requires but to be known to be most highly appreciated.

THE CRUCIFORM AND SPHERICAL BULLET.

THIS bullet, of which I claim to be the inventor, I have lately been putting to numerous tests. After having submitted it to considerable alteration, I now believe that I have arrived at that point of perfection of form and destructive power that nothing more deadly can be desired for slaying dangerous and thick-skinned game. It is over sixteen years ago, when I first submitted the cruciform to tests of a suitable description to learn its value. This was in the interior of tropical South Africa. At short ranges, say distances under one hundred yards, its performances were satisfactory enough in killing power, but a tendency to irregularity of flight was sometimes evinced. This serious fault I accounted for by the divisions being too deep and too wide in proportion to the length of the projectile, and that the bullet itself was not long enough or heavy enough in proportion to its diameter. In fact, it evinced very much the same faults that are attributed to the modern Express ball.

To obviate these objections, I have gradually increased the length of the butt of the bullet, and the proportions of the shape that I have obtained the greatest precision with, combined with destructive power, are the following :—Divide the length of the projectile into three equal parts, one-third being the distance from commencement of shoulder to point, the other two-thirds of it being a cylinder. The front part of the bullet is transversely divided into four equal sections by the finest possible partitions (the finer the better). In the apex of the ball is to be placed a circular wedge of hard wood, scarcely a quarter of an inch broad at top and three-eighths of an inch long; the top of this wedge to project slightly beyond the metal into which it is fixed with as little derangement of the cross incisions as possible. This being accomplished, dip the bullet up to the shoulder in common paraffin candle grease dissolved. What adheres of this liquid externally need not be removed.

The advantages that I claim for these alterations is that if the cruciform formation does not penetrate through too great expansion, the solid cylinder behind does, even passing through the flanges thrown out.

A large bone in a powerful animal, if struck, broke the former bullet up; in the new form the bone must give way, although the shape of the ball becomes altered; but this is really an advantage, for the wound inflicted by it is much more serious than if the bullet had retained its former regular shape.

For general guidance the ·450 bore bullet should be about one inch long, the length of the missile being increased if the bore is larger, the same external proportions being retained in regard to shape.

With a ·500 bore and this projectile, a Cape buffalo (Bos Kaffir) would most assuredly fall if the ball was well placed, and I am inclined to think the same would be the result if tried upon an elephant; however, for game possessing such thick skins and wonderful vitality, the ·560 rifle, if the sportsman possesses sufficient strength to carry it, would be an infinitely preferable weapon.

For killing the game I have mentioned, under very rare circumstances indeed, a smooth 8 or even 10, in my belief, is the best; of course using a spherical bullet. Many people have a craze for hardening their projectiles, but experience has convinced me that this is a mistake except as regards shot.

Many of our countrymen who have hunted abroad have doubtless found—more especially when using spherical bullets—how often they move in the cartridge case and cease to rest upon the inner wad. After riding to and from your shooting ground, or pursuing on horseback a wounded beast, this mishap is specially noticeable, so lately I have devoted some time to find a remedy for this evil, and have presumption enough to think that I have discovered one. It is this. Take the wad on which the bullet is to sit and puncture it near the edge at four equally distant places. Through each of these apertures draw a strong fine thread about four inches long, a knot being attached to the lower end of all. The knots are to be sunk into the lower surface of the wad, so that the bullet may repose flat upon the wad it rests upon. Having placed this wad firmly in its place, also equally divided the threads around the case, take your bullet, put a pretty large smudge of paraffin candle grease, in a putty-like consistency, upon that part of the ball that first enters the shell ; then shove it home and tie the threads firmly and transversely over the outer extremity of the projectile. The pressure used in sending the bullet home causes the grease to distribute itself evenly. I believe suction makes the final wad keep in its position. However, vibratory motion in the bullet being prevented by the threads and grease, the projectiles I experimented upon remained a positive fixture under most severe trials.

IGNITION OF GUNPOWDER, &c.

In conversation with a leading gunmaker the other day—a man of unquestionable intelligence—with surprise I heard him state that, when at the point of ignition, a preponderating portion of a charge of gunpowder became exploded, the remainder of the explosive that was not fired in the first instance got burnt on its passage up the barrel, such additional burning giving increased power towards propulsion of the charge of shot.

On this point I would like to hear the opinion of some competent person, for although a man can make a gun, I have found many whose trade it is to do so, very ignorant indeed upon important and interesting questions on practical gunnery.

"Fleur de Lys" (an officer, I believe, in the Royal Artillery) has letters lately in a leading periodical, that have interested me very much. His proposal to fill the cavity of an Express bullet with quicksilver, so as to retain gravity, particularly has done so. Like nearly all great discoveries, this is so remarkably simple that the wonder is no person has proposed it before. I feel confident that the adoption of it can but be a trifling matter of time to all thinking sportsmen.

What he says some weeks ago in praise of black powder over lately-invented explosives I thoroughly endorse. I do this not from antiquated prejudices, but practical experiences.

Schultze's wood powders are most uncertain anywhere, but in tropical and such climates as are subject to great atmospheric changes they are, in my humble belief, quite unreliable. This I saw stated by a sportsman of world-wide repute some years ago, and as opportunity offered itself, I made experiments, which amply satisfied me that he was correct. The importance of studying out and testing to the uttermost such a subject as *which is the most powerful and reliable explosive*, may be of no great moment to the cockney sportsman, for a bad or indifferent cartridge only entails upon him the loss of a rabbit, pheasant, etc.; but to the man who makes the jungles of India, or the interior of Africa, his domain, a wounded tiger or an infuriated elephant being the beasts he has to count conclusions with, life or death to the hunter may depend upon the service rendered by the explosive used.

Puffing advertisements all can read, and, except to the trade, they amount to no more than so much "gas," but to the public such advice as I and others like myself—who prefer the pursuit of dangerous game in the remote and little known parts of the earth—can give, it is entitled to, and it may be relied upon as unprejudiced, and therefore honest teaching.

By-the-bye, for the enlightenment of my readers, I will add, that I have just received intelligence by letter from a United States official of high standing to the following effect:—"A new section of country in Texas, till lately in the hands of most dangerous redskins, is now being opened up, and in it as fine shooting and fishing is to be had that any man but a glutton could not fail to be pleased with." To Texas is not a long road to travel, and living there is economical, whether you camp out or take up your residence with a *ranchero*, and such a climate as it possesses in autumn is not to be surpassed anywhere.

From my knowledge of adjoining countries, the game will in all probability consist of everything, from grizzly bears and pumas down to snipe and Virginian partridges inclusive. Trout are to be found in Northern Texas and New Mexico, where they are said to attain great size, but on this point I cannot write from my own knowledge.

THE GAME LAWS IN THE UNITED STATES.

It seems to me an utter burlesque that, in a monarchy like ours, laws cannot be enacted for the prevention of the annihilation of our hares; while in the United States, a republic, every indigenous bird or quadruped of the smallest value is provided with a close season, and law-breakers punished with such rigour that they very much hesitate before placing themselves in its power a second time.

The reason of this is that the majority of our politicians are place hunters and not patriots, so prefer popularity with the great unwashed to being benefactors of their country.

It was customary a few years ago in England to revile the United States Congressmen with such appellations as mere, office seekers, pot-house orators, etc. I think that such as did and do so should be reminded that " those who live in glass-houses should not throw stones."

From my own knowledge of the United States and of England, taking both houses, viz., Congress and Commons, I assert fearlessly that the majority of the number of the first mentioned are a far more loyal and patriotic body than are those of the second. Moreover, they have the courage to express their opinions and stick to them, in spite of constituents, cliques, and rings.

It is twenty-five years ago that the first efforts to establish game laws in the United States were made.

Many predicted dire failure to the undertaking, and expressed a belief that it would recall to the agricultural population the barbarous feudal laws of the old world, etc.

However, the prophets were in error, and every State has now its game laws, and enforces penalties for breach of them, that in severity open the eyes of frothy-mouthed democratic orators, who broadcast sow dissension and treason among the working classes and rail at all that approaches the enjoyment of manly outdoor sports.

In a country so vast as the United States, of necessity there must be much diversity of climate, so that one hard and fast line for the protection of inferior animal life cannot be made to hold good throughout the whole land. Thus a select committee is now sitting in that country for the codification of the existing laws, *id est* to make all the different State laws as nearly as possible approach each other as to the commencement and termination of the close season, and to enable a trespasser in one State to be convicted and punished in an adjoining one.

The committee appointed to examine and report upon the above matter is composed of a most able body of American gentlemen, their chairman being the Hon. Robert B. Roosevelt, late United States Minister to the Hague. This selection speaks, and not only that, means that the work undertaken is to be practically and unflinchingly performed.

I do not write the above words of approval from hearsay, but from my long personal knowledge of this excellent naturalist, sportsman, and *littérateur*. His political power in New York city has long been acknowledged, nevertheless he persistently refused to take office till lately. This may account for him not being better known out of his own country.

About twenty years ago I visited him, and expressed my belief that our waters would be benefited by the introduction of new blood into many of them. He grasped the idea at once, and; free of all expense, in a few years supplied the late Mr. Frank Buckland and self with many millions of pregnated ova of all North America's most valued breeds of fishes.

An esteemed correspondent honours me by a desire for my advice, how to put a stop to the outrageous state of the Game Laws in Ireland? I fear that my poor brains are quite inadequate to the task of solving this or any other question touching upon the Emerald Island. At the same time, I think that, if the detection of poachers were made as remunerative to excisemen and constabulary as the detection of illicit distillers, the evil would soon cease.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMPANY.

I HAVE received so many letters asking for information about the above company, that I take this means of answering them.

The South African Company has a charter from the Crown, which grants it very similar powers to those that were possessed by the old East India Company. I believe mining for precious metals will be—at least, at present—its principal occupation. However, when organization and experience have shaken down matters into their proper grooves, stock-raising and agricultural farming will certainly be practised. Indigo, cotton, coffee, sugar, rice, and tobacco will all doubtlessly be cultivated in Mashonaland. Opium could unquestionably be produced in that favoured country in remunerative quantities. As to growing tea in the possessions of the company, my own impression is that the table-lands are not sufficiently elevated for that purpose.

Labour is abundant, and consequently cheap, for the native population now existing are disposed to be industrious, are easy of control, and the reverse of warlike.

For years they have been noted throughout South Africa for their skill as blacksmiths. A Mashona assegai, or hoe, although Birmingham has tried to compete with them, still are esteemed by the adjoining races far superior to anything that has hitherto been imported. Their tools are naturally of the most primitive kind, yet Mashonas have made repairs in the iron-works of my waggons that would have done no discredit to the ordinary run of our blacksmiths. Many of the Mashona race in the capacity of labourers have visited the Diamond field, and as they are both an intelligent and observing people, have no doubt benefited in mechanical knowledge by these trips.

The climate of the country is healthy and agreeable, and is remarkably equable throughout the year. The rainy seasons are ample and regular, while dust storms—the curse of the colony of the Cape of Good Hope—are quite unknown.

I consider that Portugal had not an atom of a right when she made claim to this country; but why her pretensions were entertained for a moment by our Premier, is just one of those cases that "a fellah does not understand." However, there doubtless was some political reason that caused his apparently knock-under conduct.

I believe it is intended, in the near future, to connect Mashonaland with Bechuanaland by railroad. When such is done it will be within easy access of the old colony. Where the money will come from to complete such an undertaking I cannot say, but they have a way of their own in South Africa for finding funds for such undertakings. It is quite probable that the output of gold for this year will exceed 3,000,000*l.* from the Transvaal alone. Now, that enlightened country, in my humble belief, is not a patch upon Mashonaland in the possession of that valuable metal. If I am correct in my surmises, capital to build a railroad to so wealthy a country will not have long to be begged for.

I fear that it is getting late in the day to seek for employment in the South African Company; however, those wishing to link their fortunes with it should make application at once. There could not, in my opinion, be a better opening for the sons of gentlemen of limited means, more especially if the youngsters are partial to an active, independent, outdoor life. As a large-game country, Mashonaland a few years back was second to none ; but a mining population and large game, "do not hit it," so I expect the latter has by this time been much reduced ; but it will yet be some years before it is exterminated—if such ever does occur—for there is a wide belt of splendid breeding ground and shelter between the company's possessions and the Indian Ocean uninhabitable by white men.

Who is Lobengulo, etc. ? asks a correspondent. Well, he is a right jovial, and dignified old potentate, king or chief of the Matabeles. He is a heavy father in every respect, and not only is married, but very much married ; but that does not appear to trouble his peace of mind. I do not think that he would much object to add another "rib" to his domestic circle, for, judging from his size, he must have a very big heart indeed. He is the son of Mosulikatze, who conquered all the adjoining tribes. His name was a terror to the Bechuanas, as well as to the Boers, whom he thrashed better and oftener than even Seccocomi did. A pure Zulu by birth, with his "impi" and all their goods and chattels, he seceded from his legal sovereign, and went forth to conquer new lands and found a dynasty. Incorporating the enemies he defeated with his own people, he ultimately became the founder of the Matabele race. He was closely related by blood with the unfortunate and unjustly-treated Cetchewayo. By this I cast no reflection upon our home Government, but upon the adjoining English colony to Zululand.

IGNITION IN GUN-BARREL.

An old companion asks me what I think of the following statement made to him by a gunmaker :—

"When at the point of ignition, a preponderating portion of a charge of gunpowder became exploded, the remainder of the explosive that was not then fired in the first instance, gets burnt on its passage up the barrel, such additional burning giving increased power towards propulsion of the charge of shot."

In spite of being considered egotistical, I will state my view on what he is desirous to learn, viz., does the ignition of unburnt gunpowder, in its passage up the barrel, give increased velocity to the shot?

We are all mortal, and, therefore, prone to error, so if I am wrong in what I am about to state as my belief, correct me, for I hold that none are too old to learn. I do not think that powder igniting on its passage up the barrel, after the first ignition takes place, adds to the velocity of the projectile, but, on the other hand, detracts from it. This struck me to be the case as far back as the siege of Sebastopol, and the, to me, most painful yet cruelly practical illustration that set me thinking on the subject, cost me two friends, whose names I will not recall, as even after this lapse of time there may still exist relatives of the unfortunates, whose grief for their early death has not yet become quite effaced.

The first instance occurred near the Victoria redoubt. The victim was a young engineer officer, just relieved from duty, and returning to his division. The sun had scarcely risen and the morning was as calm and clear as spring produces in that charming part of the earth. Poor young fellow; he was sauntering leisurely back, doubtlessly enjoying his release, and possibly contemplating the numerous, beautiful wild plants that were, in countless quantities, forcing their way through the earth. A shell passed over his head, and, when it had gone a hundred yards or more it burst, and a fragment of it deprived him of life. The exact spot in the air where the explosive burst could not be mistaken, for a small, but gradually expanding, puff of dense white smoke indisputably marked it.

The next instance was near the mortar battery, in front of the picket-house, so not far from the Light Division's encampment. The circumstances were almost identical with the first mentioned, but death did not bring instantaneous relief to the sufferer.

The fragments of shell that caused both fatalities came back some distance from where the explosion occurred, although it was traversing space at a rapid rate in a reverse direction. Now I think that this shows that gunpowder suddenly ignited will explode in all directions. A view of a shell burst at night looks like a fireball centre with innumerable flaming arms radiating from it, nor does this body of fire appear as if propelled forward, but, on the other hand, to remain stationary at the place where the explosion occurs. It would be interesting to know if the fragments from the front of the bombshell go as far or further in the direction originally travelled by the projectile when intact, than those fragments that are propelled backwards. This might be a difficult matter to decide, but I am inclined to believe that they do not, for the reason that the ignition backwards would be more abrupt, more general, and consequently more powerful. I have not alluded to those portions of the projectile that have been forced up into space, or those parts that have been driven downwards, but they will play an important function in the application of my surmises and facts when discussing further this subject.

After what I have said in reference to the explosion of shells, does it not look more than possible—nay, probable, that gunpowder, ignited in its course up the barrel, throws all its force back and forwards, as it is impossible for any of it to go up or down? If so, does not a portion of the lately ignited powder militate in some degree to retard the velocity and powers of what was first fired, with the negative advantage of adding a trifling assistance to the propelling power that the projectiles have already received? If such be the case, there is of necessity an exact quantity of powder, beyond which you cannot go without injuring the shooting of your gun.

I hope that I have expressed myself in this matter in such terms as can be understood by all, for I have been compelled to repeat over and over again the same words, a proceeding I have a very great dislike to.

LETTER FROM AN AMERICAN GENTLEMAN.

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SIR,—As an American of much experience on this side of the Atlantic, and one who, through the courtesy and kindness of your countrymen, has had many opportunities of enjoying the various field sports of Great Britain, I would beg to say a few words relevant to the future of field sports on both sides of the Atlantic.

I see the Hares Bill will soon be again before Parliament, and that Sir William Harcourt is again resolved to oppose these poor persecuted animals being granted a close time. It is a great pity that you cannot transplant that ponderous and burgomaster type of statesman to the other side of the herring-pond, and that when there he could be induced to express his views antagonistic to game protection, for his phlegmatic frame and understanding would be so shocked, horrified, and possibly scared by the hostile attitude of the various sportsmen's clubs, and conscientious methods they have of expressing their disapproval of his views, that the words game laws would never afterwards issue from his far from eloquent mouth. Such politicians as the gentleman above alluded to were very common among us before and during "the war," and did a great deal to stir up the much-to-be-lamented strife between the North and South, but our people see through them now, and any attempt to repeat their unpatriotic actions would be visited with universal condemnation. My opinion of this statesman's course, and the belief of all my countrymen that I have spoken to upon the subject, is that he desires to sow dissention between the agricultural labourer and the artisan, the yeoman and the shopkeeper, the country gentleman and the manufacturer; in fact, to put class against class, and in the strife that ensues between them to gather sufficient supporters together to place him in office. To accomplish this, his vast intellect can find nothing so "pat" to his purpose as to abuse the so-called unjust, unfair, tyrannical Game Laws, and impress the ignorant with the erroneous belief that they, and they alone, were the causes of all the miseries that exist now and did exist among the lower classes when the feudal system was in full force.

English sportsmen have the sympathies of American sportsmen, for, although we are Republicans, yet we are intensely conservative—anomalous terms truly, but visit us at home, and you will soon comprehend that what I say is correct. The idea of introducing the American wood grouse into Great Britain is an admirable one, and doubtless will be made a success, but France has taken the lead of you in the experiment, as well as having added to these birds, a consignment of our western large species of hares, familiarly known by our prairie people as jack-rabbits. The hale and hearty old warrior, Marshal McMahon, is credited with being the projector of this laudable step.

The first allusion that I have observed in regard to introducing the common quail of Europe into the United States was from your pen, and is an admirable suggestion, and so simple in all its details that it is certain to be promptly acted upon. I have shot the birds on both sides of the Mediterranean and in the "far East," and it comes up most thoroughly to all the requirements that the sportsman demands, being swift of wing, emitting a fair scent, laying well to dogs, and frequenting open arable, or brush-covered ground, where your setters and pointers can always be viewed at their work, and no impediment to interfere with your aim. In my belief, your common quail is a very hard bird to hit, much more so than a snipe, for the reason that you can never get them sufficiently elevated over the ground (with which their colour so admirably harmonizes) as to see them against the sky over the barrel of your gun. At times, in the Levant, Malta, and the Sicilies, it has made me savage to see an oily, garlic-smelling, picturesque, but entirely undesirable native, with a ten-dollar gun, and a pinch of powder and shot in it for a load, knocking over bird after bird as fast as he could stow them in his befringed and gorgeously-ornamented game bag. You can see some queer-looking gunners out in the Western States, but they would not be in it as to rig, if you clapped them alongside of one of these South of Europe brigand-looking, swarthy-complexioned humans.

Of course, you are well aware that we have innumerable sportsmen's clubs in America, and some of these institutions are rich and quite lavish with their funds when their money can be laid out advantageously. Now, what I would advise them to do, especially those near the Atlantic seaboard, is to fence off a space of several acres of thick-bottomed grass land, or ground cropped with oats or barley, and into each of these enclosures turn, say, a thousand brace of quail. If such corals were established in New Jersey, Maryland, Eastern Virginia, and Long Island, and the birds retained captive till the breeding season was over, and then gradually permitted to escape, I am convinced that a big success could be made in acclimatization, so I thoroughly agree with you on this question. Four thousand quails at 1*s.* a brace would be but 200*l.*, or 1000 dols., a mosquito sum to be divided among several clubs. Other expenses, such as freight and erecting compounds, would be but a trifle. Such an experiment, I say, is bound to succeed in the United States from the nature of its soil and vegetable productions, but more especially from its geographical position, for the little strangers cannot go further south than Florida and the Gulf of Mexico, if they desired to do so, which I doubt very much. In England, raising quail would be a different matter. The Straits of Dover are too narrow to confine them to their birthplace, so any effort in that direction would be simply for the benefit of your neighbours.

I should dearly like to see all our rich men and clubs work in harmony and unanimity in this matter, if it even went so far as purchasing *for a season* every head of this game that came alive into the French market. Remember, the greater the number imported the sooner would sportsmen be able to regard them among the game of the country. Our "Bob White" (*Ortix virginianus*) has been getting scarcer and scarcer yearly, and I believe the European introduction would do much to lessen our own birds' destruction. That knowledge alone should be a stimulus for prompt and effective action, for the scheme that I have endeavoured to put before you is a most important one to all those across the Atlantic that love the legitimate use of the gun.

The following information I have just received from across the water. The State of Michigan has ordered over five millions of the fry of various *Salmonidæ* to stock some of their northern waters. In addition, there has been sent to different destinations from the New York State Hatchery this season 625,000 salmon-trout fry, 1,273,000 trout fry, in addition to 2,300,000 pregnated salmon-trout eggs, 42,000 brook-trout eggs, and 731,500 brown trout eggs.

White fish are also being sent daily from the

Jefferson County Hatchery to Lake Ontario, the benefit of which will be felt as much by Canadians as by our own citizens.

It may well be asked how all this immense business is carried on, and at whose expense. Efficient and experienced persons are employed and well paid by the respective legislatures of States, and the people provide the money.

His Excellency Robert Roosevelt, late U.S. Minister at the Hague, and the late Mr. Seth Green, originally started pisciculture combined with fish and game protection. Their work was uphill at first, but after a time the electors saw the benefit that would result to all by uniting in action to support these gentlemen's efforts, so that we have game wardens now, judiciously placed where their services are required, that would almost imprison their own fathers for looking at a deer, grouse, or hare out of season.

I am inclined to believe, after all, that what between Mr. Gladstone's ambiguous oratory and Sir William Harcourt's mis-statements, that old England is nearer by long odds, the out-and-out Radical Republic than ever we have been since the war of Independence.

THE END.

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